A SIMPLETON

VOL. I.

A SIMPLETON

A Story of the Day

By CHARLES READE

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

It has lately been objected to me, in studiously courteous terms of course, that I borrow from other books, and am a Plagiarist. To this I reply that I borrow facts from every accessible source, and am not a Plagiarist. The Plagiarist is one, who borrows from a homogeneous work: for such a man borrows not ideas only, but their treatment. He who borrows only from heterogeneous works is not a Plagiarist. All fiction, worth a button, is founded on facts; and it does not matter one straw whether the facts are taken from personal experience, hearsay, or printed

books; only those books must not be works of fiction.

Ask your common sense why a man writes better fiction at forty, than he can at twenty. It is simply because he has gathered more facts, from each of these three sources—experience, hearsay, print.

To those who have science enough to appreciate the above distinction, I am very willing to admit that in all my tales I use a vast deal of heterogeneous material, which in a life of study I have gathered from men, journals, blue-books, histories, biographies, law reports, etc. And, if I could, I would gladly specify all the various printed sources to which I am indebted. But my memory is not equal to such a feat. I can only say that I rarely write a novel without milking about two hundred heterogeneous cows into my pail, and that "A Simpleton" is no exception to my

general method; that method is the true method, and the best, and if on that method I do not write prime novels, it is the fault of the man, and not of the method.

I give the following particulars as an illustration of my method:—

In "A Simpleton" the whole business of the girl spitting blood, the surgeon ascribing it to the liver, the consultation, and the final solution of the mystery, is a matter of personal experience accurately recorded. But the rest of the medical truths, both fact and argument, are all from medical books far too numerous to specify. This includes the strange fluctuations of memory in a man recovering his reason by degrees. The behaviour of the Doctor's first two patients I had from a surgeon's daughter in Pimlico. The servant-girl and her box; the purple-faced, pig-faced Beak, and his justice, are per-

sonal experience. The business of house-renting, and the auction-room, is also personal experience.

In the nautical business I had the assistance of two practical seamen, my brother William Barrington Reade, and Lieutenant Charles Edward Reade, R.N.

In the South African business I gleaned from Mr. Day's recent handbooks; the old handbooks; Galton's "Vacation Tourist;" "Philip Mavor; or Life among the Caffres;" "Fossor;" "Notes on the Cape of Good Hope," 1821; "Scenes and Occurrences in Albany and Caffreland," 1827; Bowler's "South African Sketches;" "A Campaign in South Africa," Lucas; "Five Years in Caffreland," Mrs. Ward; etc., etc., etc. But my principal obligation on this head is to Mr. Boyle, the author of some admirable letters to the *Daily Telegraph*, which he afterwards reprinted in a delightful

volume. Mr. Boyle has a painter's eye, and a writer's pen, and if the African scenes in a "Simpleton" please my readers, I hope they will go to the fountain-head, where they will find many more.

As to the plot and characters, they are invented.

The title, "A Simpleton," is not quite new. There is a French play called *La Niaise*. But *La Niaise* is in reality a woman of rare intelligence, who is taken for a simpleton by a lot of conceited fools, and the play runs on their blunders, and her unpretending wisdom. That is a very fine plot, which I recommend to our female novelists. My aim in these pages has been much humbler, and is, I hope, too clear to need explanation.

CHARLES READE.

A SIMPLETON.

CHAPTER I.

A YOUNG lady sat pricking a framed canvas, in the drawing-room of Kent Villa, a mile from Gravesend; she was making, at a cost of time and tinted wool, a chair-cover, admirably unfit to be sat upon—except by some peevish artist, bent on obliterating discordant colours. To do her justice, her mind was not in her work; for she rustled softly with restlessness as she sat, and she rose three times in twenty minutes, and went to the window. Thence she looked down, over a trim, flowery lawn, and long, sloping meadows, on to the silver Thames,

alive with steam-boats ploughing, white sails bellying, and great ships carrying to and fro the treasures of the globe. From this fair landscape, and epitome of commerce, she retired each time with listless disdain; she was waiting for Somebody.

Yet she was one of those whom few men care to keep waiting. Rosa Lusignan was a dark, but dazzling beauty, with coal-black hair, and glorious dark eyes, that seemed to beam with soul all day long; her eyebrows, black, straightish, and rather thick, would have been majestic, and too severe, had the other features followed suit; but her black brows were succeeded by long silky lashes, a sweet oval face, two pouting lips studded with ivory, and an exquisite chin, as feeble as any man could desire in the partner of his bosom. Person—straight, elastic, and rather tall. Mind—nineteen. Accomplishments — numerous; a poor French scholar, a worse German, a worse English, an admirable dancer, an inaccurate

musician, a good rider, a bad draughtswoman, a bad hair-dresser, at the mercy of her maid; a hot theologian, knowing nothing, a sorry accountant, no housekeeper, no sempstress, a fair embroideress, a capital geographer, and no cook.

Collectively, viz., mind and body, the girl we kneel to.

This ornamental member of society now glanced at the clock once more, and then glided to the window for the fourth time. She peeped at the side a good while, with superfluous slyness, or shyness, and presently she drew back, blushing crimson; then she peeped again, still more furtively; then retired softly to her frame, and, for the first time, set to work in earnest; as she plied her harpoon, smiling now, the large and vivid blush, that had suffused her face and throat, turned from carnation to rose, and melted away slowly, but perceptibly, and ever so sweetly; and somebody knocked at the street door.

The blow seemed to drive her deeper into her work. She leaned over it, graceful as a willow, and so absorbed, she could not even see the door of the room open, and Doctor Staines come in.

All the better: her not perceiving that slight addition to her furniture, gives me a moment to describe him.

A young man, five feet eleven inches high, very square shouldered and deep chested, but so symmetrical, and light in his movements, that his size hardly struck one at first. He was smooth shaved, all but a short, thick, auburn whisker; his hair was brown. His features no more than comely: the brow full, the eyes wide apart, and deep-seated, the lips rather thin, but expressive, the chin solid and square. It was a face of power, and capable of harshness; but relieved by an eye of unusual colour, between hazel and grey, and wonderfully tender. In complexion, he could not compare with Rosa; his cheek was clear, but

pale; for few young men had studied night and day so constantly. Though but twenty-eight years of age, he was literally a learned physician; deep in hospital practice; deep in books; especially deep in German science, too often neglected, or skimmed, by English physicians. He had delivered a course of lectures at a learned university with general applause.

As my reader has divined, Rosa was preparing the comedy of a cool reception; but, looking up, she saw his pale cheek tinted with a lover's beautiful joy at the bare sight of her, and his soft eye so divine with love, that she had not the heart to chill him. She gave him her hand kindly, and smiled brightly on him instead of remonstrating. She lost nothing by it, for the very first thing he did was to excuse himself eagerly. "I am behind time: the fact is, just as I was mounting my horse, a poor man came to the gate to consult me. He had a terrible disorder I have sometimes

succeeded in arresting—I attack the cause instead of the symptoms, which is the old practice—and so that detained me. You forgive me?"

"Of course. Poor man!—only you said you wanted to see papa, and he always goes out at two."

When she had been betrayed into saying this, she drew in suddenly, and blushed with a pretty consciousness.

"Then don't let me lose another minute," said the lover. "Have you prepared him for—for—what I am going to have the audacity to say?"

Rosa answered, with some hesitation, "I *must* have—a little. When I refused Colonel Bright—you need not devour my hand quite—he is forty."

Her sentence ended, and away went the original topic, and grammatical sequence along with it. Christopher Staines recaptured them both. "Yes, dear, when you refused Colonel Bright——"

"Well, papa was astonished; for everybody says the Colonel is a most eligible match. Don't you hate that expression? I do. Eligible!"

Christopher made due haste, and recaptured her. "Yes, love, your papa said——?"

"I don't think I will tell you. He asked me was there anybody else; and of course I said 'No.'"

"Oh!"

"Oh, that is nothing; I had not time to make up my mind to tell the truth. I was taken by surprise; and you know one's first impulse is to fib—about *that*."

"But did you really deceive him?"

"No, I blushed; and he caught me; so he said, 'Come, now, there was.'"

"And you said, 'Yes, there is,' like a brave girl as you are."

"What, plump like that? No, I was frightened out of my wits, like a brave girl as I am not, and said I should never marry any one he could disapprove; and then—

oh, then I believe I began to cry. Christopher, I'll tell you something; I find people leave off teasing you when you cry; gentlemen, I mean. Ladies go on all the more. So then dear papa kissed me, and told me I must not be imprudent, and throw myself away, that was all; and I promised him I never would. I said he would be sure to approve my choice; and he said he hoped so. And so he will."

Dr. Staines looked thoughtful, and said he hoped so too. "But now it comes to the point of asking him for such a treasure, I feel my deficiencies."

"Why, what deficiencies? You are young, and handsome, and good, and ever so much cleverer than other people. You have only to ask for me, and insist on having me. Come, dear, go and get it over." She added, mighty coolly, "There is nothing so *dreadful* as suspense."

"I'll go this minute," said he, and took a step towards the door; but he turned,

and in a moment was at her knees. He took both her hands in his, and pressed them to his beating bosom, while his beautiful eyes poured love into hers point-blank. "May I tell him you love me? Oh, I know you cannot love me as I love you; but I may say you love me a little, may I not? that will go farther with him than anything else. May I, Rosa, may I?—a little?"

His passion mastered her. She dropped her head sweetly on his shoulder, and murmured, "You know you may, my own. Who would not love you?"

He parted lingeringly from her, then marched away, bold with love and hope, to demand her hand in marriage.

Rosa leaned back in her chair, and quivered a little with new emotions. Christopher was right; she was not capable of loving like him; but still the actual contact of so strong a passion made her woman's nature vibrate. A dewy tear

hung on the fringes of her long lashes, and she leaned back in her chair, and fluttered awhile.

That emotion, almost new to her, soon yielded, in her girlish mind, to a complacent languor; and that, in its turn, to a soft reverie. So she was going to be married! To be mistress of a house, settle in London; (*that* she had quite determined long ago); be able to go out into the streets all alone, to shop, or visit; have a gentleman all her own, whom she could put her finger on any moment, and make him take her about, even to the opera and the theatre; to give dinner-parties her own self, and even a little ball once in a way; to buy whatever dresses she thought proper, instead of being crippled by an allowance; have the legal right of speaking first in society, even to gentlemen rich in ideas but bad starters, instead of sitting mumchance and mock-modest; to be Mistress, instead of Miss—contemptible title; to be a woman, instead

of a girl; and all this rational liberty, domestic power, and social dignity, were to be obtained by merely wedding a dear fellow, who loved her, and was so nice; and the bright career to be ushered in with several delights, each of them dear to a girl's very soul; presents from all her friends; as many beautiful new dresses as if she was changing her body or her hemisphere, instead of her name; *éclat;* going to church, which is a good English girl's theatre of display and temple of vanity, and there tasting delightful publicity and whispered admiration, in a heavenly long veil, which she could not wear even once if she remained single.

This bright variegated picture of holy wedlock, and its essential features, as revealed to young ladies by feminine tradition, though not enumerated in the Book of Common Prayer writ by grim males, so entranced her, that time flew by unheeded, and Christopher Staines came back from her

father. His step was heavy; he looked pale, and deeply distressed; then stood like a statue, and did not come close to her, but cast a piteous look, and gasped out one word, that seemed almost to choke him,—"REFUSED!"

Miss Lusignan rose from her chair, and looked almost wildly at him with her great eyes. "Refused?" said she, faintly.

"Yes," said he, sadly. "Your father is a man of business; and he took a mere business view of our love: he asked me directly what provision I could make for his daughter and her children. Well, I told him I had three thousand pounds in the Funds, and a good profession; and then I said I had youth, health, and love, boundless love, the love that can do, or suffer, the love that can conquer the world."

"Dear Christopher! And what *could* he say to all that?"

"He ignored it entirely. There, I'll

give you his very words. He said, 'In that case, Dr. Staines, the simple question is, what does your profession bring you in per annum?'"

"Oh!—There—I always hated arithmetic, and now I abominate it."

"Then I was obliged to confess I had scarcely received a hundred pounds in fees this year; but I told him the reason; this is such a small district, and all the ground occupied. London, I said, was my sphere."

"And so it is," said Rosa, eagerly; for this jumped with her own little designs. "Genius is wasted in the country. Besides, whenever anybody worth curing is ill down here, they always send to London for a doctor."

"I told him so, dearest," said the lover. "But he answered me directly, then I must set up in London, and as soon as my books showed an income to keep a wife, and servants, and children, and insure my life for five thousand pounds——"

"Oh, that is so like papa. He is director of an insurance company, so all the world must insure their lives."

"No, dear, he was quite right there: professional incomes are most precarious. Death spares neither young nor old, neither warm hearts nor cold. I should be no true physician if I could not see my own mortality." He hung his head and pondered a moment, then went on, sadly, "It all comes to this—until I have a professional income of eight hundred a year at least, he will not hear of our marrying; and the cruel thing is he will not even consent to an engagement. But," said the rejected, with a look of sad anxiety, "you will wait for me without that, dear Rosa?"

She could give him that comfort, and she gave it him with loving earnestness. "Of course I will; and it shall not be very long. Whilst you are making your fortune, to please papa, I will keep fretting, and pouting, and crying, till he sends for you."

"Bless you, dearest. Stop! not to make yourself ill! not for all the world." There spoke the lover and the physician.

He came, all gratitude, to her side, and they sat, hand in hand, comforting each other: indeed parting was such sweet sorrow that they sat, handed, and very close to one another, till Mr. Lusignan, who thought five minutes quite enough for rational beings to take leave in, walked into the room and surprised them. At sight of his grey head and iron-grey eyebrows, Christopher Staines started up and looked confused; he thought some apology necessary, so he faltered out, "Forgive me, sir; it is a bitter parting to me, you may be sure."

Rosa's bosom heaved at these simple words. She flew to her father, and cried, "Oh, papa! papa! you were never cruel before;" and hid her burning face on his shoulder; and then burst out crying, partly for Christopher, partly because she was now

ashamed of herself for having taken a young man's part so openly.

Mr. Lusignan looked sadly discomposed at this outburst: she had taken him by his weak point; he told her so. "Now, Rosa," said he, rather peevishly, "you know I hate —noise."

Rosa had actually forgotten that trait for a single moment; but, being reminded of it, she reduced her sobs in the prettiest way, not to offend a tender parent who could not bear noise. Under this homely term, you must know, he included all scenes, disturbances, rumpuses, passions; and expected all men, women, and things, in Kent Villa, to go smoothly; or go elsewhere.

"Come, young people," said he, "don't make a disturbance. Where's the grievance? Have I said he shall never marry you? Have I forbidden him to correspond? or even to call, say twice a year. All I say is, no marriage, nor contract of marriage, until there is an income." Then he turned

to Christopher. "Now if you can't make an income without her, how could you make one with her, weighed down by the load of expenses a wife entails? I know her better than you do; she is a good girl, but rather luxurious and self-indulgent. She is not cut out for a poor man's wife. And pray don't go and fancy that nobody loves my child but you. Mine is not so hot as yours, of course; but believe me, sir, it is less selfish. You would expose her to poverty and misery; but I say no; it is my duty to protect her from all chance of them; and, in doing it, I am as much your friend as hers, if you could but see it. Come, Dr. Staines, be a man, and see the world as it is. I have told you how to earn my daughter's hand and my esteem: you must gain both, or neither."

Dr. Staines was never quite deaf to reason: he now put his hand to his brow and said, with a sort of wonder and pitiful dismay, "My love for Rosa selfish! Sir,

your words are bitter and hard." Then, after a struggle, and with rare and touching candour, "Ay, but so are bark and steel; yet they are good medicines." Then with a great glow in his heart and tears in his eyes, "My darling shall not be a poor man's wife, she who would adorn a coronet, ay, or a crown. Good-bye, Rosa, for the present." He darted to her, and kissed her hand with all his soul. "Oh, the sacrifice of leaving you," he faltered; "the very world is dark to me without you. Ah well, I must earn the right to come again." He summoned all his manhood, and marched to the door. There he seemed to turn calmer all of a sudden, and said firmly, yet humbly, "I'll try and show you, sir, what love can do."

"And I'll show you what love can suffer," said Rosa, folding her beautiful arms superbly.

It was not in her to have shot such a bolt, except in imitation; yet how promptly the mimic thunder came, and how grand

the beauty looked, with her dark brows, and flashing eyes, and folded arms! much grander and more inspired than poor Staines, who had only furnished the idea.

But between these two figures swelling with emotion, the representative of common sense, Lusignan *père*, stood cool and impassive; he shrugged his shoulders, and looked on both lovers as a couple of ranting novices he was saving from each other and almshouses.

For all that, when the lover had torn himself away, papa's composure was suddenly disturbed by a misgiving. He stepped hastily to the stairhead, and gave it vent. "Doctor Staines," said he, in a loud whisper (Staines was half-way down the stairs: he stopped). "I trust to you, as a gentleman, not to mention this; it will never transpire here. Whatever we do—no noise!"

CHAPTER II.

Rosa Lusignan set herself pining as she had promised; and she did it discreetly for so young a person; she was never peevish, but always sad and listless; by this means she did not anger her parent, but only made him feel she was unhappy, and the house she had hitherto brightened exceeding dismal.

By degrees this noiseless melancholy undermined the old gentleman, and he well-nigh tottered.

But one day, calling suddenly on a neighbour with six daughters, he heard peals of laughter, and found Rosa taking her full share of the senseless mirth. She pulled up short at sight of him and coloured high; but it was too late; for he launched a know-

ing look at her on the spot, and muttered something about seven foolish virgins.

He took the first opportunity when they were alone, and told her he was glad to find she was only dismal at home.

But Rosa had prepared for him. "One can be loud without being gay at heart," said she, with a lofty, languid air. "I have not forgotten your last words to *him*. We were to hide our broken hearts from the world. I try to obey you, dear papa; but, if I had my way, I would never go into the world at all; I have but one desire now; to end my days in a convent."

"Please begin them first. A convent! Why you'd turn it out of window. You are no more fit to be a nun than—a pauper."

Not having foreseen this facer, Rosa had nothing ready; so she received it with a sad, submissive, helpless sigh; as who would say, "Hit me, papa, I have no friend now." So then he was sorry he had been so clever; and indeed there is one provoking thing

about "a woman's weakness"—it is invincible.

The next minute what should come but a long letter from Dr. Staines, detailing his endeavours to purchase a practice in London, and his ill-success. The letter spoke the language of love and hope; but the facts were discouraging; and indeed a touching sadness pierced through the veil of the brave words.

Rosa read it again and again, and cried over it before her father, to encourage him in his heartless behaviour.

About ten days after this something occurred that altered her mood.

She became grave and thoughtful, but no longer lugubrious. She seemed desirous to atone to her father for having disturbed his cheerfulness. She smiled affectionately on him, and often sat on a stool at his knee, and glided her hand into his.

He was not a little pleased, and said to

himself, "She is coming round to common sense."

Now, on the contrary, she was farther from it than ever.

At last he got the clue. One afternoon he met Mr. Wyman coming out of the villa. Mr. Wyman was the consulting surgeon of that part.

"What? anybody ill?" said Mr. Lusignan: "one of the servants?"

"No; it is Miss Lusignan."

"Why, what is the matter with her?"

Wyman hesitated. "Oh, nothing very alarming. Would you mind asking her?"

"Why?"

"The fact is, she requested me not to tell you; made me promise."

"And I insist upon your telling me."

"And I think you are quite right, sir, as her father. Well, she is troubled with a little spitting of blood."

Mr. Lusignan turned pale. "My child! spitting of blood! God forbid."

"Oh, do not alarm yourself. It is nothing serious."

"Don't tell me," said the father. "It is always serious. And she kept this from me!"

Masking his agitation for the time, he inquired how often it had occurred, this grave symptom.

"Three or four times this last month. But I may as well tell you at once I have examined her carefully, and I do not think it is from the lungs."

"From the throat, then?"

"No, from the liver. Everything points to that organ as the seat of derangement: not that there is any lesion; only a tendency to congestion. I am treating her accordingly, and have no doubt of the result."

"Who is the ablest physician hereabouts?" asked Lusignan, abruptly.

"Dr. Snell, I think."

"Give me his address."

"I'll write to him, if you like, and

appoint a consultation." He added, with vast but rather sudden alacrity, "It will be a great satisfaction to my own mind."

"Then send to him, if you please, and let him be here to-morrow morning; if not, I shall take her to London for advice at once."

On this understanding they parted, and Lusignan went at once to his daughter. "Oh, my child!" said he, deeply distressed, "how could you hide this from me?"

"Hide what, papa?" said the girl, looking the picture of unconsciousness.

"That you have been spitting blood."

"Who told you that?" said she, sharply.

"Wyman; he is attending you."

Rosa coloured with anger. "Chatterbox! He promised me faithfully not to."

"But why, in Heaven's name? What! would you trust this terrible thing to a stranger, and hide it from your poor father?"

"Yes," replied Rosa, quietly.

The old man would not scold her now:

he only said, sadly, "I see how it is: because I will not let you marry poverty, you think I do not love you." And he sighed.

"Oh, papa! the idea!" said Rosa. "Of course I know you love me. It was not that, you dear, darling, foolish papa. There, if you must know, it was because I did not want you to be distressed. I thought I might get better with a little physic; and, if not, why then I thought, 'Papa is an old man; la! I dare say I shall last his time;' and so, why should I poison your latter days with worrying about *me?*"

Mr. Lusignan stared at her, and his lip quivered; but he thought the trait hardly consistent with her superficial character. He could not help saying, half sadly, half bitterly, "Well, but of course you have told Dr. Staines."

Rosa opened her beautiful eyes, like two suns. "Of course I have done nothing of the sort. He has enough to trouble him,

without that. Poor fellow! there he is, worrying and striving to make his fortune, and gain your esteem—'they go together,' you know; you told him so." (Young cats will scratch when least expected.) "And for me to go and tell him I am in danger! Why, he would go wild; he would think of nothing but me and my health; he would never make his fortune: and so then, even when I am gone, he will never get a wife, because he has only got genius, and goodness, and three thousand pounds. No, papa, I have not told poor Christopher. I may tease those I love; I have been teasing *you* this ever so long; but frighten them, and make them miserable? No."

And here, thinking of the anguish that was perhaps in store for those she loved, she wanted to cry; it almost choked her not to. But she fought it bravely down: she reserved her tears for lighter occasions and less noble sentiments.

Her father held out his arms to her; she

ran her footstool to him, and sat nestling to his heart.

"Please forgive me my misconduct. I have not been a dutiful daughter ever since you——but now I will. Kiss me, my own papa. There! Now we are as we always were."

Then she purred to him on every possible topic but the one that now filled his parental heart, and bade him good-night at last with a cheerful smile.

Wyman was exact, and ten minutes afterwards Dr. Snell drove up in a carriage and pair. He was intercepted in the hall by Wyman, and, after a few minutes' conversation, presented to Mr. Lusignan.

The father gave vent to his paternal anxiety in a few simple, but touching words, and was proceeding to state the symptoms as he had gathered them from his daughter; but Dr. Snell interrupted him politely, and said he had heard the principal symptoms from Mr. Wyman.

Then, turning to the latter, he said, "We had better proceed to examine the patient."

"Certainly," said Mr. Lusignan. "She is in the drawing-room;" and he led the way, and was about to enter the room, when Wyman informed him it was against etiquette for him to be present at the examination.

"Oh, very well," said he. "Yes, I see the propriety of that. But oblige me by asking her if she has anything on her mind."

Dr. Snell bowed a lofty assent; for to receive a hint from a layman was to confer a favour on him.

The men of science were closeted full half an hour with the patient. She was too beautiful to be slurred over, even by a busy doctor: he felt her pulse, looked at her tongue, and listened attentively to her lungs, to her heart, and to the organ suspected by Wyman. He left her at last with a kindly assurance that the case was perfectly curable.

At the door they were met by the anxious father, who came, with throbbing heart, and asked the doctor's verdict.

He was coolly informed that could not be given until the consultation had taken place; the result of that consultation would be conveyed to him.

"And pray why can't I be present at the consultation? The grounds on which two able men agree or disagree must be well worth listening to."

"No doubt," said Dr. Snell; "but," with a superior smile, "my dear sir, it is not the etiquette."

"Oh, very well," said Lusignan. But he muttered, "So, then, a father is nobody."

And this unreasonable person retired to his study, miserable, and gave up the dining-room to the consultation.

They soon rejoined him.

Dr. Snell's opinion was communicated by Wyman. "I am happy to tell you that

Dr. Snell agrees with me entirely : the lungs are not affected, and the liver is congested, but not diseased."

"Is that so, Dr. Snell?" asked Lusignan anxiously.

"It is so, sir." He added, "The treatment has been submitted to me, and I quite approve it."

He then asked for a pen and paper, and wrote a prescription. He assured Mr. Lusignan that the case had no extraordinary feature whatever; he was not to alarm himself. Dr. Snell then drove away, leaving the parent rather puzzled, but, on the whole, much comforted.

And here I must reveal an extraordinary circumstance—

Wyman's treatment was by drugs.

Dr. Snell's was by drugs.

Dr. Snell, as you have seen, entirely approved Wyman's treatment.

His own had nothing in common with it. The Arctic and Antarctic poles are not

farther apart than was his prescription from the prescription he thoroughly approved.

Amiable science! In which complete diversity of practice did not interfere with perfect uniformity of opinion.

All this was kept from Dr. Staines, and he was entirely occupied in trying to get a position that might lead to fortune and satisfy Mr. Lusignan. He called on every friend he had, to inquire where there was an opening. He walked miles and miles in the best quarters of London, looking for an opening; he let it be known in many quarters that he would give a good premium to any physician who was about to retire, and would introduce him to his patients.

No; he could hear of nothing.

Then, after a great struggle with himself, he called upon his uncle, Philip Staines, a retired M.D., to see if he would do anything for him. He left this to the last, for a very good reason: Dr. Philip was an

irritable old bachelor, who had assisted most of his married relatives; but, finding no bottom to the well, had turned rusty, and crusty, and now was apt to administer kicks instead of cheques, to all who were near and dear to him. However, Christopher was the old gentleman's favourite, and was now desperate; so he mustered courage, and went. He was graciously received; warmly indeed. This gave him great hopes, and he told his tale.

The old bachelor sided with Mr. Lusignan. "What!" said he, "do you want to marry, and propagate pauperism? I thought you had more sense. Confound it all! I had just one nephew whose knock at my street-door did not make me tremble; he was a bachelor, and a thinker, and came for a friendly chat; the rest are married men, highwaymen, who come to say, 'Stand and deliver;' and now even you want to join the giddy throng. Well, don't ask me to have any hand in it. You

are a man of promise; and you might as well hang a mill-stone round your neck as a wife. Marriage is a greater mistake than ever now; the women dress more, and manage worse. I met your cousin Jack the other day, and his wife with seventy pounds on her back; and next door to paupers. No; whilst you are a bachelor, like me, you are my favourite, and down in my will for a lump. Once marry, and you join the noble army of footpads, leeches, vultures, paupers, gone coons, and babblers about brats—and I disown you."

There was no hope from old Crusty. Christopher left him, snubbed, and heart-sick. At last he met a sensible man, who made him see there was no short cut in that profession. He must be content to play the uphill game; must settle in some good neighbourhood, marry if possible, since husbands, and fathers of families, prefer married physicians; and so be poor at thirty, comfortable at forty, and rich at fifty—perhaps.

Then Christopher came down to his lodgings at Gravesend, and was very unhappy; and, after some days of misery, he wrote a letter to Rosa in a moment of impatience, despondency, and passion.

Rosa Lusignan got worse and worse. The slight but frequent hæmorrhage was a drain upon her system, and weakened her visibly. She began to lose her rich complexion, and sometimes looked almost sallow; and a slight circle showed itself under her eyes. These symptoms were unfavourable; nevertheless, Dr. Snell and Mr. Wyman accepted them cheerfully, as fresh indications that nothing was affected but the liver; they multiplied and varied their prescriptions; the malady ignored those prescriptions, and went steadily on. Mr. Lusignan was terrified, but helpless. Rosa resigned and reticent.

But it was not in human nature that a girl of this age could always, and at all

hours, be mistress of herself. One evening in particular she stood before the glass in the drawing-room, and looked at herself a long time with horror: "Is that Rosa Lusignan?" said she, aloud, "It is her ghost."

A deep groan startled her. She turned; it was her father. She thought he was fast asleep; and so indeed he had been; but he was just awaking, and heard his daughter utter her real mind. It was a thunderclap. "Oh! my child! what shall I do?" he cried.

Then Rosa was taken by surprise in her turn. She spoke out. "Send for a great physician, papa. Don't let us deceive ourselves; it is our only chance."

"I will ask Mr. Wyman to get a physician down from London."

"No, no; that is no use; they will put their heads together, and he will say whatever Mr. Wyman tells him. La, papa! a clever man like you, not to see what a cheat

that consultation was. Why, from what you told me, one can see it was managed so that Dr. Snell could not possibly have an opinion of his own. No; no more echoes of Mr. Chatterbox. If you really want to cure me, send for Christopher Staines."

"Dr. Staines! he is very young."

"But he is very clever, and he is not an echo. He won't care how many doctors he contradicts, when I am in danger. Papa, it is your child's one chance."

"I'll try it," said the old man eagerly. "How confident you look! your colour has come back. It is an inspiration. Where is he?"

"I think by this time he must be at his lodgings in Gravesend. Send to him to-morrow morning."

"Not I. I'll go to him to-night. It is only a mile, and a fine clear night."

"My own, good, kind papa! Ah well, come what may, I have lived long enough

to be loved. Yes, dear papa, save me. I am very young to die; and he loves me so dearly."

The old man bustled away to put on something warmer for his night walk, and Rosa leaned back, and the tears welled out of her eyes, now he was gone.

Before she had recovered her composure, a letter was brought her, and this was the letter, from Christopher Staines, alluded to already.

She took it from the servant, with averted head, not wishing it to be seen she had been crying, and she started at the handwriting; it seemed such a coincidence that it should come just as she was sending for him.

"MY OWN BELOVED ROSA,

"I now write to tell you, with a heavy heart, that all is vain. I cannot make, nor purchase, a connection, except as others do, by time and patience. Being a bachelor is quite against a young physician.

If I had a wife, and such a wife as you, I should be sure to get on; you would increase my connection very soon. What, then, lies before us? I see but two things—to wait till we are old, and our pockets are filled, but our hearts chilled or soured; or else to marry at once, and climb the hill together. If you love me, as I love you, you will be saving, till the battle is over; and I feel I could find energy and fortitude for both. Your father, who thinks so much of wealth, can surely settle something on *you;* and I am not too poor to furnish a house and start fair. I am not quite obscure—my lectures have given me a name—and to you, my own love, I hope I may say that I know more than many of my elders, thanks to good schools, good method, a genuine love of my noble profession, and a tendency to study from my childhood. Will you not risk something on my ability? If not, God help me, for I shall lose you; and what is life, or fame, or

wealth, or any mortal thing to me, without you? I cannot accept your father's decision; *you* must decide my fate.

"You see I have kept away from you until I can do so no more. All this time the world to me has seemed to want the sun, and my heart pines and sickens for one sight of you. Darling Rosa, pray let me look at your face once more.

"When this reaches you I shall be at your gate. Let me see you, though but for a moment, and let me hear my fate from no lips but yours.

"My own love,

"Your heart-broken lover,

"CHRISTOPHER STAINES."

This letter stunned her at first. Her mind of late had been turned away from love to such stern realities. Now she began to be sorry she had not told him. "Poor thing!" she said to herself, "he little knows that now all is changed; papa, I

sometimes think, would deny me nothing now; it is I who would not marry him—to be buried by him in a month or two. Poor Christopher!"

The next moment she started up in dismay. Why, her father would miss him. No, perhaps catch him waiting for her. What would he think? What would Christopher think? that she had shown her papa his letter.

She rang the bell hard. The footman came.

"Send Harriet to me this instant. Oh! and ask papa to come to me."

Then she sat down, and dashed off a line to Christopher. This was for Harriet to take out to him. Anything better than for Christopher to be caught doing what was wrong.

The footman came back first. "If you please, miss, master has gone out."

"Run after him—the road to Gravesend."

"Yes, miss."

"No. It is no use. Never mind."

"Yes, miss."

Then Harriet came in. "Did you want me, miss?"

"Yes. No—never mind now."

She was afraid to do anything for fear of making matters worse. She went to the window, and stood looking anxiously out, with her hands working. Presently she uttered a little scream, and shrank away to the sofa. She sank down on it, half sitting, half lying, hid her face in her hands, and waited.

Staines, with a lover's impatience, had been more than an hour at the gate, or walking up and down close by it, his heart now burning with hope, now freezing with fear, that she would decline a meeting on these terms.

At last the postman came, and then he saw he was too soon; but now in a few minutes

Rosa would have his letter, and then he should soon know whether she would come or not. He looked up at the drawing-room windows. They were full of light. She was there, in all probability. Yet she did not come to them. But why should she, if she was coming out?

He walked up and down the road. She did not come. His heart began to sicken with doubt. His head drooped; and perhaps it was owing to this that he almost ran against a gentleman who was coming the other way. The moon shone bright on both faces.

"Dr. Staines!" said Mr. Lusignan, surprised. Christopher uttered an ejaculation more eloquent than words.

They stared at each other.

"You were coming to call on us?"

"N—no," stammered Christopher.

Lusignan thought that odd; however, he said, politely, "No matter, it is fortunate. Would you mind coming in?"

"No," faltered Christopher, and stared at him ruefully, puzzled more and more; but beginning to think, after all, it might be a casual meeting.

They entered the gate, and in one moment, he saw Rosa at the window, and she saw him.

Then he altered his opinion again. Rosa had sent her father out to him. But how was this? the old man did not seem angry. Christopher's heart gave a leap inside him, and he began to glow with the wildest hopes. For what could this mean but relenting?

Mr. Lusignan took him first into the study, and lighted two candles himself. He did not want the servants prying.

The lights showed Christopher a change in Mr. Lusignan. He looked ten years older.

"You are not well, sir;" said Christopher, gently.

"My health is well enough; but I am a

broken-hearted man. Dr. Staines, forget all that passed hère at your last visit. All that is over. Thank you for loving my poor girl as you do; give me your hand; God bless you. Sir, I am sorry to say it is as a physician I invite you now. She is ill, sir, very—very ill."

"Ill! and not tell me!"

"She kept it from you, my poor friend, not to distress you; and she tried to keep it from me; but how could she? for two months she has had some terrible complaint—it is destroying her. She is the ghost of herself. Oh, my poor child! my child!"

The old man sobbed aloud. The young man stood trembling, and ashy pale. Still, the habits of his profession, and the experience of dangers overcome, together with a certain sense of power, kept him up; but, above all, love and duty said, "Be firm." He asked for an outline of the symptoms.

They alarmed him greatly.

"Let us lose no more time," said he, "I will see her at once."

"Do you object to my being present?"

"Of course not."

"Shall I tell you what Dr. Snell says it is, and Mr. Wyman?"

"By all means—after I have seen her."

This comforted Mr. Lusignan. He was to get an independent judgment at all events.

When they reached the top of the stairs Dr. Staines paused, and leaned against the baluster. "Give me a moment," said he. "The patient must not know how my heart is beating; and she must see nothing in my face but what I choose her to see. Give me your hand once more, sir; let us both control ourselves. Now announce me."

Mr. Lusignan opened the door, and said, with forced cheerfulness, "Dr. Staines, my dear! come to give you the benefit of his skill."

She lay on the sofa, just as we left her. Only her bosom began to heave.

Then Christopher Staines drew himself up, and the majesty of knowledge and love together seemed to dilate his noble frame. He fixed his eye on that reclining, panting figure, and stepped lightly but firmly across the room, to know the worst—like a lion walking up to levelled lances.

CHAPTER III.

THE young physician walked steadily up to his patient without taking his eye off her, and drew a chair to her side.

Then she took down one hand—the left—and gave it him, averting her face tenderly, and still covering it with her right—"For," said she to herself, "I am such a fright now." This opportune reflection, and her heaving bosom, proved that she at least felt herself something more than his patient. Her pretty consciousness made his task more difficult: nevertheless, he only allowed himself to press her hand tenderly with both his palms one moment, and then he entered on his functions bravely. "I am here as your physician."

"Very well," said she, softly.

He gently detained the hand, and put his finger lightly to her pulse; it was palpitating, and a fallacious test: oh, how that beating pulse, by love's electric current, set his own heart throbbing in a moment!

He put her hand gently, reluctantly down, and said, "Oblige me by turning this way." She turned, and he winced internally at the change in her; but his face betrayed nothing. He looked at her full; and, after a pause, put her some questions: one was as to the colour of the hæmorrhage. She said it was bright red.

"Not a tinge of purple?"

"No," said she, hopefully, mistaking him.

He suppressed a sigh.

Then he listened at her shoulder-blade, and at her chest, and made her draw her breath while he was listening. The acts were simple, and usual in medicine, but there was a deep, patient, silent intensity about his way of doing them.

Mr. Lusignan crept nearer, and stood with both hands on a table, and his old head bowed, awaiting, yet dreading the verdict.

Up to this time, Dr. Staines, instead of tapping, and squeezing, and pulling the patient about, had never touched her with his hand, and only grazed her with his ear: but now he said, "Allow me," and put both hands to her waist, more lightly and reverently than I can describe: "Now draw a deep breath, if you please."

"There!"

"If you could draw a deeper still," said he, insinuatingly.

"There, then!" said she, a little pettishly.

Dr. Staines's eye kindled.

"Hum!" said he. Then, after a considerable pause—"Are you better, or worse, after each hæmorrhage?"

"La!" said Rosa; "they never asked me that. Why, better."

"No faintness?"

"Not a bit."

"Rather a sense of relief, perhaps?"

"Yes. I feel lighter, and better."

The examination was concluded.

Dr. Staines looked at Rosa, and then at her father. The agony in that aged face, and the love that agony implied, won him, and it was to the parent he turned to give his verdict.

"The hæmorrhage is from the lungs——"

Lusignan interrupted him: "From the lungs!" cried he, in dismay.

"Yes; a slight congestion of the lungs."

"But not incurable! Oh! not incurable, doctor!"

"Heaven forbid! It is curable—easily—by removing the cause."

"And what is the cause?"

"The cause?"—He hesitated, and looked rather uneasy—"Well, the cause, sir, is——tight stays."

The tranquillity of the meeting was instantly disturbed. "Tight stays! Me!" cried Rosa. "Why I am the loosest girl in

England. Look, papa!" And, without any apparent effort, she drew herself in, and poked her little fist between her sash and her gown. "There!"

Dr. Staines smiled sadly and a little sarcastically: he was evidently shy of encountering the lady in this argument; but he was more at his ease with her father; so he turned towards him and lectured him freely.

"That is wonderful, sir; and the first four or five female patients that favoured me with it, made me disbelieve my other senses; but Miss Lusignan is now about the thirtieth who has shown me that marvellous feat, with a calm countenance that belies the Herculean effort. Nature has her everyday miracles: a boa-constrictor, diameter seventeen inches, can swallow a buffalo; a woman, with her stays bisecting her almost, and lacerating her skin, can yet for one moment make herself seem slack, to deceive a juvenile physician. The snake is the

miracle of expansion; the woman is the prodigy of contraction."

"Highly grateful for the comparison!" said Rosa. "Women and snakes!"

Dr. Staines blushed, and looked uncomfortable. "I did not mean to be offensive; it certainly was a very clumsy comparison."

"What does that matter?" said Mr. Lusignan, impatiently. "Be quiet, Rosa, and let Dr. Staines and me talk sense."

"Oh! then I am nobody in the business!" said this wise young lady.

"You are everybody," said Staines, soothingly. "But," suggested he, obsequiously, "if you don't mind, I would rather explain my views to your father—on this one subject."

"And a pretty subject it is."

Doctor Staines then invited Mr. Lusignan to his lodgings, and promised to explain the matter anatomically. "Meantime," said he, "would you be good enough to put your hands to my waist, as I did to the patient's."

Mr. Lusignan complied; and the patient began to titter directly, to put them out of countenance.

"Please observe what takes place when I draw a full breath."

"Now apply the same test to the patient. Breathe your best, please, Miss Lusignan."

The patient put on a face full of saucy mutiny.

"To oblige us both."

"Oh! how tiresome!"

"I am aware it is rather laborious," said Staines, a little drily; "but, to oblige your father!"

"Oh, anything to oblige papa," said she, spitefully. "There!—And I do hope it will be the last—la! no; I don't hope that, neither."

Doctor Staines politely ignored her little attempts to interrupt the argument. "You found, sir, that the muscles of my waist, and my intercostal ribs themselves, rose and

fell with each inhalation, and exhalation, of air by the lungs."

"I did; but my daughter's waist was like dead wood, and so were her lower ribs."

At this volunteer statement, Rosa coloured to her temples. "Thanks, papa! Pack me off to London, and sell me for a big doll!"

"In other words," said the lecturer, mild and pertinacious, "with us the lungs have room to blow, and the whole bony frame expands elastic with them, like the woodwork of a blacksmith's bellows; but with this patient, and many of her sex, that noble and divinely framed bellows is crippled and confined by a powerful machine of human construction; so it works lamely and feebly: consequently too little air, and of course too little oxygen, passes through that spongy organ whose very life is air. Now mark the special result in this case: being otherwise healthy and vigorous, our patient's system sends into the lungs more

blood than that one crippled organ can deal with; a small quantity becomes extravasated at odd times; it accumulates, and would become dangerous; then Nature, strengthened by sleep, and by some hours' relief from the diabolical engine, makes an effort, and flings it off: that is why the hæmorrhage comes in the morning, and why she is the better for it, feeling neither faint nor sick, but relieved of a weight. This, sir, is the *rationale* of the complaint; and it is to you I must look for the cure. To judge from my other female patients, and from the few words Miss Lusignan has let fall, I fear we must not count on any very hearty co-operation from her: but you are her father, and have great authority; I conjure you to use it to the full, as you once used it—to my sorrow—in this very room. I am forgetting my character. I was asked here only as her physician. Good evening."

He gave a little gulp, and hurried away,

with an abruptness that touched the father, and offended the sapient daughter.

However, Mr. Lusignan followed him, and stopped him before he left the house, and thanked him warmly; and to his surprise, begged him to call again in a day or two.

"Well, Rosa! what do you say?"

"I say that I am very unfortunate in my doctors. Mr. Wyman is a chatterbox, and knows nothing. Dr. Snell is Mr. Wyman's echo. Christopher is a genius, and they are always full of crotchets. A pretty doctor! Gone away, and not prescribed for me!"

Mr. Lusignan admitted it was odd. "But, after all," said he, "if medicine does you no good?"

"Ah, but any medicine *he* had prescribed would have done me good: and that makes it all the unkinder."

"If you think so highly of his skill,

why not take his advice? it can do no harm."

"No harm? Why if I was to leave them off I should catch a dreadful cold; and that would be sure to settle on my chest, and carry me off, in my present delicate state. Besides, it is so unfeminine not to wear them."

This staggered Mr. Lusignan, and he was afraid to press the point; but what Staines had said fermented in his mind.

Dr. Snell and Mr. Wyman continued their visits, and their prescriptions.

The patient got a little worse.

Mr. Lusignan hoped Christopher would call again: but he did not.

When Dr. Staines had satisfied himself that the disorder was easily curable, then wounded pride found an entrance even into his loving heart. That two strangers should have been consulted, before him! He was only sent for because they could not cure her.

As he seemed in no hurry to repeat his visit, Mr. Lusignan called on him, and said, politely, he had hoped to receive another call ere this. "Personally," said he, "I was much struck with your observations: but my daughter is afraid she will catch cold if she leaves off her corset, and that, you know, might be very serious."

Dr. Staines groaned. And, when he had groaned, he lectured. "Female patients are wonderfully monotonous in this matter; they have a programme of evasions; and, whether the patient is a lady, or a housemaid, she seldom varies from that programme. You find her breathing life's air, with half a bellows, and you tell her so. 'Oh no,' says she; and does the gigantic feat of contraction we witnessed that evening at your house. But, on inquiry, you learn there is a raw red line ploughed in her flesh by the cruel stays. 'What is that?' you ask, and flatter yourself you have pinned her. Not a bit. 'That was the last

pair. I changed them, because they hurt me.' Driven out of that, by proofs of recent laceration, they say, 'If I leave them off I should catch my death of cold,' which is equivalent to saying there is no flannel in the shops, no common sense nor needles at home."

He then laid before him some large French plates, showing the organs of the human trunk, and bade him observe in how small a space, and with what skill, the Creator has packed so many large, yet delicate organs, so that they should be free, and secure from friction, though so close to each other. He showed him the liver, an organ weighing four pounds, and of large circumference; the lungs, a very large organ suspended in the chest and impatient of pressure; the heart, the stomach, the spleen, all of them too closely and artfully packed to bear any further compression.

Having thus taken him by the eye, he took him by the mind.

"Is it a small thing for the creature to say to her Creator, 'I can pack all this egg-china better than you can,' and thereupon to jam all those vital organs close, by a powerful, a very powerful and ingenious machine? Is it a small thing for that sex, which, for good reasons, the Omniscient has made larger in the waist than the male, to say to her Creator, 'You don't know your business; women ought to be smaller in the waist than men, and shall be throughout the civilised world?'"

In short, he delivered so many true and pointed things on this trite subject, that the old gentleman was convinced, and begged him to come over that very evening and convince Rosa.

Dr. Staines shook his head dolefully, and all his fire died out of him at having to face the fair. "Reason will be wasted. Authority is the only weapon. My profession and my reading have both taught me that the whole character of her sex

undergoes a change the moment a man interferes with their dress. From Chaucer's day to our own, neither public satire, nor private remonstrance, has ever shaken any of their monstrous fashions. Easy, obliging, pliable, and weaker of will than men in other things, do but touch their dress, however objectionable, and rock is not harder, iron is not more stubborn, than these soft and yielding creatures. It is no earthly use my coming.—I'll come."

He came that very evening, and saw directly she was worse. "Of course," said he, sadly, "you have not taken my advice."

Rosa replied with a toss and an evasion, "I was not worth a prescription!"

"A physician can prescribe without sending his patient to the druggist: and, when he does, then it is his words are gold."

Rosa shook her head with an air of lofty incredulity.

He looked ruefully at Mr. Lusignan, and

was silent. Rosa smiled sarcastically; she thought he was at his wit's end.

Not quite: he was cudgelling his brains in search of some horribly unscientific argument, that might prevail; for he felt science would fall dead upon so fair an antagonist. At last his eye kindled; he had hit on an argument unscientific enough for anybody, he thought. Said he, ingratiatingly, "You believe the Old Testament?"

"Of course I do. Every syllable."

"And the lessons it teaches?"

"Certainly."

"Then let me tell you a story from that book. A Syrian general had a terrible disease. He consulted Elisha, by deputy. Elisha said, 'Bathe seven times in a certain river, Jordan, and you will get well.' The general did not like this at all; he wanted a prescription; wanted to go to the druggist; didn't believe in hydropathy to begin, and, in any case, turned up his nose at Jordan. What, bathe in an Israelitish brook, when

his own country boasted noble rivers, with a reputation for sanctity into the bargain? In short, he preferred his leprosy to such irregular medicine. But it happened, by some immense fortuity, that one of his servants, though an Oriental, was a friend, instead of a flatterer; and this sensible fellow said, 'If the prophet told you to do some great and difficult thing, to get rid of this fearful malady, would not you do it, however distasteful? and can you hesitate when he merely says, "Wash in the Jordan, and be healed?"' The general listened to good sense, and cured himself. Your case is parallel: You would take quantities of foul medicine, you would submit to some painful operation, if life and health depended on it; then why not do a small thing, for a great result? you have only to take off an unnatural machine, which cripples your growing frame, and was unknown to every one of the women, whose forms in Parian marble the world admires. Off with that

monstrosity, and your cure is as certain as the Syrian general's; though science, and not inspiration, dictates the easy remedy."

Rosa had listened impatiently, and now replied with some warmth, "This is shockingly profane. The idea of comparing yourself to Elisha! and me to a horrid leper! Much obliged. Not that I know what a leper is."

"Come, come, that is not fair," said Mr. Lusignan. "He only compared the situation, not the people."

"But, papa, the Bible is not to be dragged into the common affairs of life."

"Then what on earth is the use of it?"

"Oh, papa!—Well, it is not Sunday, but I have had a sermon. This is the clergyman; and you are the commentator;—he! he! And so now let us go back from divinity to medicine. I repeat" (this was the first time she had said it) "that my other doctors give me real prescriptions, written in hieroglyphics. You can't look

at them, without feeling there *must* be something in them."

An angry spot rose on Christopher's cheek; but he only said, "And are your other doctors satisfied with the progress your disorder is making under their superintendence?"

"Perfectly. Papa, tell him what they say, and I'll find him their prescriptions." She went to a drawer, and rummaged, affecting not to listen.

Lusignan complied. "First of all, sir, I must tell you they are confident it is not the lungs, but the liver."

"The what!" shouted Christopher.

"Ah!" screamed Rosa. "Oh, don't!—bawling."

"And don't you screech," said her father, with a look of misery and apprehension impartially distributed on the resounding pair.

"You must have misunderstood them," murmured Staines, in a voice that was now

barely audible a yard off. "The hæmorrhage of a bright red colour, and expelled without effort or nausea?"

"From the liver—they have assured me again and again," said Lusignan.

Christopher's face still wore a look of blank amazement, till Rosa herself confirmed it positively.

Then he cast a look of agony upon her, and started up in a passion, forgetting, once more, that his host abhorred the sonorous. "Oh shame! shame!" he cried, "that the noble profession of medicine should be disgraced by ignorance such as this." Then he said, sternly, "Sir, do not mistake my motives; but I decline to have anything further to do with this case, until those two gentlemen have been relieved of it; and, as this is very harsh, and on my part, unprecedented, I will give you one reason out of many I *could* give you. Sir, there is no road from the liver to the throat by which blood can travel in this way, defying

the laws of gravity; and they knew, from the patient, that no strong expellent force has ever been in operation. Their diagnosis, therefore, implies agnosis, or ignorance too great to be forgiven. I will not share my patient with two gentlemen who know so little of medicine, and know nothing of anatomy, which is the A B C of medicine. Can I see their prescriptions?"

These were handed to him. "Good heavens!" said he, "have you taken all these?"

"Most of them."

"Why then you have drunk about two gallons of unwholesome liquids, and eaten a pound or two of unwholesome solids. These medicines have co-operated with the malady. The disorder lies, not in the hæmorrhage, but in the precedent extravasation; that is a drain on the system; and how is the loss to be supplied? Why by taking a little more nourishment than before; there is no other way; and pro-

bably Nature, left to herself, might have increased your appetite to meet the occasion. But those two worthies have struck that weapon out of Nature's hand; they have peppered away at the poor ill-used stomach, with drugs and draughts, not very deleterious I grant you, but all more or less indigestible, and all tending, not to whet the appetite, but to clog the stomach, or turn the stomach, or pester the stomach, and so impair the appetite, and so co-operate, indirectly, with the malady."

"This is good sense," said Lusignan. "I declare I—I wish I knew how to get rid of them."

"Oh, I'll do that, papa."

"No, no; it is not worth a rumpus."

"I'll do it too politely for that. Christopher, you are very clever; *terribly* clever. Whenever I threw their medicinès away, I was always a little better that day. I will sacrifice them to you. It *is* a sacrifice. They are both so kind and chatty, and

don't grudge me hieroglyphics; now you do."

She sat down and wrote two sweet letters, to Dr. Snell and Mr. Wyman, thanking them for the great attention they had paid her; but, finding herself getting steadily worse, in spite of all they had done for her, she proposed to discontinue her medicines for a time, and try change of air.

"And suppose they call to see whether you are changing the air?"

"In that case, papa—'not at home.'"

The notes were addressed and despatched.

Then Dr. Staines brightened up, and said to Lusignan, "I am now happy to tell you that I have overrated the malady. The sad change I see in Miss Lusignan is partly due to the great bulk of unwholesome esculents she has been eating and drinking under the head of medicines. These discontinued, she might linger on for years, existing, though not living—the tight-laced cannot be said to live. But, if she would be healthy and

happy, let her throw that diabolical machine into the fire. It is no use asking her to loosen it; she can't. Once there, the temptation is too strong. Off with it, and, take my word, you will be one of the healthiest and most vigorous young ladies in Europe."

Rosa looked rueful, and almost sullen. She said she had parted with her doctors for him, but she really could not go about without stays. "They are as loose as they can be. See!"

"That part of the programme is disposed of," said Christopher. "Please go on to No. 2. How about the raw red line where the loose machine has sawed you?"

"What red line? No such thing! Somebody or other has been peeping in at my window. I'll have the ivy cut down tomorrow."

"Simpleton!" said Mr. Lusignan, angrily. "You have let the cat out of the bag. There is such a mark, then, and this extra-

ordinary young man has discerned it with the eye of science."

"He never discerned it at all," said Rosa, red as fire; "and, what is more, he never will."

"I don't want to. I should be very sorry to. I hope it will be gone in a week."

"I wish *you* were gone now; exposing me in this cruel way," said Rosa, angry with herself for having said an idiotic thing, and furious with him for having made her say it.

"Oh, Rosa!" said Christopher, in a voice of tenderest reproach.

But Mr. Lusignan interfered promptly. "Rosa, no noise. I will not have you snapping at your best friend and mine. If you are excited, you had better retire to your own room and compose yourself. I hate a clamour."

Rosa made a wry face at this rebuke, and then began to cry quietly.

Every tear was like a drop of blood from Christopher's heart. "Pray, don't scold her, sir," said he, ready to snivel himself. "She meant nothing unkind: it is only her pretty sprightly way; and she did not really imagine a love so reverent as mine——"

"Don't *you* interfere between my father and me," said this reasonable young lady, now in an ungovernable state of feminine irritability.

"No, Rosa," said Christopher, humbly. "Mr. Lusignan," said he, "I hope you will tell her that, from the very first, I was unwilling to enter on this subject with *her*. Neither she nor I can forget my double character. I have not said half as much to her as I ought, being her physician; and yet you see I have said more than she can bear from me, who, she knows, love her and revere her. Then, once for all, do pray let me put this delicate matter into your hands: it is a case for parental authority."

"Unfatherly tyranny, that means," said Rosa. "What business have gentlemen interfering in such things? It is unheard of. I will not submit to it, even from papa."

"Well, you need not scream at me," said Mr. Lusignan; and he shrugged his shoulders to Staines. "She is impracticable, you see. If I do my duty, there will be a disturbance."

Now this roused the bile of Dr. Staines. "What, sir," said he, "you could separate her and me by your authority, here in this very room; and yet, when her life is at stake, you abdicate! You could part her from a man who loved her with every drop of his heart,—and she said she loved him, or, at all events, preferred him to others,—and you cannot part her from a miserable corset, although you see, in her poor wasted face, that it is carrying her to the churchyard! In that case, sir, there is but one thing for you to do; withdraw your opposition and let me marry her. As

her lover I am powerless: but invest me with a husband's authority, and you will soon see the roses return to her cheek, and her elastic figure expanding, and her eye beaming with health and the happiness that comes of perfect health."

Mr. Lusignan made an answer neither of his hearers expected. He said, "I have a great mind to take you at your word. I am too old and fond of quiet to drive a Simpleton in single harness."

This contemptuous speech, and, above all, the word Simpleton, which had been applied to her pretty freely by young ladies at school, and always galled her terribly, inflicted so intolerable a wound on Rosa's vanity, that she was ready to burst: on that, of course, her stays contributed their mite of physical uneasiness. Thus irritated, mind and body, she burned to strike in return; and, as she could not slap her father in the presence of another, she gave it Christopher backhanded.

"You can turn me out of doors," said she, "if you are tired of your daughter; but I am not such a *simpleton* as to marry a tyrant. No: he has shown the cloven foot in time. A husband's *authority*, indeed!" Then she turned her hand, and gave it him direct. "You told me a different story when you were paying your court to me; then, you were to be my servant; all hypocritical sweetness. You had better go and marry a Circassian slave. They don't wear stays, and they do wear trousers; so she will be unfeminine enough, even for you. No English lady would let her husband dictate to her about such a thing. I can have as many husbands as I like, without falling into the clutches of a tyrant. You are a rude, indelicate—— And so please understand it is all over between you and me."

Both her auditors stood aghast, for she uttered this conclusion with a dignity of which the opening gave no promise, and the

occasion, weighed in masculine balances, was not worthy.

"You do not mean that. You cannot mean it," said Dr. Staines, aghast.

"I do mean it," said she, firmly; "and, if you are a gentleman, you will not compel me to say it twice—three times, I mean."

At this dagger-stroke Christopher turned very pale, but he maintained his dignity. "I am a gentleman," said he, quietly, "and a very unfortunate one. Good-bye, sir; thank you kindly. Good-bye, Rosa; God bless you. Oh, pray take a thought. Remember, your life and death are in your own hand now. I am powerless."

And he left the house in sorrow, and just, but not pettish, indignation.

When he was gone, father and daughter looked at each other, and there was the silence that succeeds a storm.

Rosa, feeling the most uneasy, was the first to express her satisfaction. "There, *he* is gone; and I am glad of it. Now you

and I shall never quarrel again. I was quite right. Such impertinence! Such indelicacy! A fine prospect for me if I had married such a man! However, he is gone, and so there's an end of it. The idea! telling a young lady, before her father, she is tight-laced. If you had not been there I could have forgiven him. But I am not; it is a story. Now," suddenly exalting her voice, "I know you believe him."

"I say nothing," whispered papa, hoping to still her by example. This *ruse* did not succeed.

"But you look volumes," cried she; "and I can't bear it. I won't bear it. If you don't believe *me*, ask my *maid*." And with this felicitous speech, she rang the bell.

"You'll break the wire if you don't mind," suggested her father, piteously.

"All the better! Why should not wires be broken as well as my heart? Oh, here she is. Now, Harriet, come here."

"Yes, miss."

"And tell the truth. *Am* I tight-laced?"

Harriet looked in her face a moment to see what was required of her, and then said, "That you are not, miss. I never dressed a young lady as wore 'em easier than you do."

"There, papa. That will do, Harriet."

Harriet retired as far as the key-hole; she saw something was up.

"Now," said Rosa, "you see I was right; and, after all, it was a match you did not approve. Well, it is all over, and now you may write to your favourite, Colonel Bright. If he comes here, I'll box his old ears. I hate him. I hate them all. Forgive your wayward girl. I'll stay with you all my days. I daresay that will not be long, now I have quarrelled with my guardian angel: and all for what? Papa! papa! how *can* you sit there and not speak me one word of comfort? '*Simpleton!*' Ah!

that I am, to throw away a love a queen is scarcely worthy of: and all for what? Really, if it wasn't for the ingratitude and wickedness of the thing, it is too laughable. Ha! ha!—oh! oh! oh!—ha! ha! ha!"

And off she went into hysterics, and began to gulp and choke frightfully.

Her father cried for help, in dismay. In ran Harriet, saw, and screamed, but did not lose her head; this veracious person whipped a pair of scissors off the table, and cut the young lady's staylaces directly. Then there was a burst of imprisoned beauty; a deep, deep sigh of relief came from a bosom that would have done honour to Diana; and the scene soon concluded with fits of harmless weeping, renewed at intervals.

When it had settled down to this, her father, to soothe her, said he would write to Dr. Staines, and bring about a reconciliation, if she liked.

"No," said she, "you shall kill me sooner. I should die of shame."

She added, "Oh, pray, from this hour, never mention his name to me."

And then she had another cry.

Mr. Lusignan was a sensible man: he dropped the subject for the present: but he made up his mind to one thing; that he would never part with Dr. Staines as a physician.

Next day Rosa kept her own room until dinner-time, and was as unhappy as she deserved to be. She spent her time in sewing on stiff flannel linings, and crying. She half hoped Christopher would write to her, so that she might write back that she forgave him. But not a line.

At half-past six her volatile mind took a turn, real or affected. She would cry no more for an ungrateful fellow—ungrateful for not seeing through the stone walls how she had been employed all the morning; and making it up—so she bathed her red

eyes, made a great alteration in her dress, and came dancing into the room, humming an Italian ditty.

As they were sitting together in the dining-room after dinner, two letters came by the same post to Mr. Lusignan—from Mr. Wyman and Dr. Snell.

Mr. Wyman's letter:

"Dear Sir,

"I am sorry to hear from Miss Lusignan that she intends to discontinue medical advice. The disorder was progressing favourably, and nothing to be feared, under proper treatment.

"Yours, etc."

Dr. Snell's letter:

"Dear Sir,

"Miss Lusignan has written to me somewhat impatiently, and seems disposed to dispense with my visits. I do not, how-

ever, think it right to withdraw, without telling you candidly that this is an unwise step. Your daughter's health is in a very precarious condition.

"Yours, etc."

Rosa burst out laughing. "I have nothing to fear; and I'm on the brink of the grave. That comes of writing without a consultation. If they had written at one table, I should have been neither well nor ill. Poor Christopher!" and her sweet face began to work piteously.

"There; there: drink a glass of wine."

She did, and a tear with it, that ran into the glass like lightning.

Warned by this that grief sat very near the bright hilarious surface, Mr. Lusignan avoided all emotional subjects for the present. Next day, however, he told her she might dismiss her lover, but no power should make him dismiss his pet physician, unless her health improved.

"I will not give you that excuse for inflicting him on me again," said the young hypocrite.

She kept her word. She got better, and better, stronger, brighter, gayer.

She took to walking every day, and increasing the distance, till she could walk ten miles without fatigue.

Her favourite walk was to a certain cliff that commanded a noble view of the sea: to get to it she must pass through the town of Gravesend; and we may be sure she did not pass so often through that city without some idea of meeting the lover she had used so ill, and eliciting an *apology* from him. Sly puss!

When she had walked twenty times, or thereabouts, through the town, and never seen him, she began to fear she had offended him past hope. Then she used to cry at the end of every walk.

But by-and-by bodily health, vanity, and temper, combined to rouse the defiant spirit.

Said she, "If he really loved me, he would not take my word in such a hurry. And, besides, why does he not watch me, and find out what I am doing, and where I walk?"

At last she really began to persuade herself that she was an ill-used and slighted girl. She was very angry at times, and disconsolate at others; a mixed state in which hasty and impulsive young ladies commit life-long follies.

Mr. Lusignan observed the surface only: he saw his invalid daughter getting better every day, till at last she became a picture of health and bodily vigour. Relieved of his fears, he troubled his head but little about Christopher Staines. Yet he esteemed him, and had got to like him; but Rosa was a beauty, and could do better than marry a struggling physician, however able. He launched out into a little gaiety, resumed his quiet dinner parties; and, after some persuasion, took his now blooming daughter to a ball given by the officers of Chatham.

She was the belle of the ball, beyond dispute, and danced with ethereal grace and athletic endurance. She was madly fond of waltzing, and here she encountered, what she was pleased to call, a divine dancer. It was a Mr. Reginald Falcon, a gentleman who had retired to the seaside to recruit his health and finances, sore tried by London and Paris. Falcon had run through his fortune; but had acquired, in the process, certain talents, which as they cost the acquirer dear, so they sometimes repay him, especially if he is not over-burdened with principle, and adopts the notion that, the world having plucked him, he has a right to pluck the world. He could play billiards well, but never so well as when backing himself for a heavy stake. He could shoot pigeons well, and his shooting improved under that which makes some marksmen miss, a heavy bet against the gun. He danced to perfection; and, being a well-bred, experienced, brazen, adroit fellow,

who knew a little of everything that was going, he had always plenty to say: above all, he had made a particular study of the fair sex; had met with many successes, many rebuffs, and at last, by keen study of their minds, and a habit he had acquired of watching their faces, and shifting his helm accordingly, had learned the great art of pleasing them. They admired his face; to me, the short space between his eyes and his hair, his aquiline nose, and thin straight lips, suggested the bird of prey a little too much: but to fair doves, born to be clutched, this similitude perhaps was not very alarming, even if they observed it.

Rosa danced several times with him, and told him he danced like an angel. He informed her that was because, for once, he was dancing with an angel. She laughed, and blushed. He flattered deliciously, and it cost him little; for he fell in love with her that night, deeper than he had ever been in his whole life of intrigue. He

asked leave to call on her: she looked a little shy at that, and did not respond. He instantly withdrew his proposal, with an apology and a sigh that raised her pity. However, she was not a forward girl, even when excited by dancing, and charmed with her partner; so she left him to find his own way out of that difficulty.

He was not long about it. At the end of the next waltz he asked her if he might venture to solicit an introduction to her father.

"Oh! certainly," said she. "What a selfish girl I am; this is terribly dull for him."

The introduction being made, and Rosa being engaged for the next three dances, Mr. Falcon sat by Mr. Lusignan and entertained him. For this little piece of apparent self-denial he was paid in various coin: Lusignan found out he was the son of an old acquaintance, and so the door of Kent Villa opened to him; meantime, Rosa

Lusignan never passed him, even in the arms of a cavalry officer, without bestowing a glance of approval and gratitude on him. "What a good-hearted young man," thought she. "How kind of him to amuse papa; and now I can stay so much longer."

Falcon followed up the dance by a call, and was infinitely agreeable: followed up the call by another, and admired Rosa with so little disguise that Mr. Lusignan said to her, "I think you have made a conquest. His father had considerable estates in Essex. I presume he inherits them."

"Oh, never mind his estates," said Rosa, "he dances like an angel, and gossips charmingly, and *is* so nice."

Christopher Staines pined for this girl in silence: his fine frame got thinner, his pale cheek paler, as she got rosier and rosier; and how? why by following the very advice she had snubbed him for giving her. At last, he heard she had been the belle of a ball, and that she had been seen walking

miles from home, and blooming as a Hebe. Then his deep anxiety ceased, his pride stung him furiously; he began to think of his own value, and to struggle with all his might against his deep love. Sometimes he would even inveigh against her, and call her a fickle, ungrateful girl, capable of no strong passion, but vanity. Many a hard term he applied to her in his sorrowful solitude; but not a word when he had a hearer. He found it hard to rest: he kept dashing up to London and back. He plunged furiously into study. He groaned and sighed, and fought the hard and bitter fight that is too often the lot of the deep that love the shallow. Strong, but single-hearted, no other lady could comfort him. He turned from female company; and shunned all for the fault of one.

The inward contest wore him. He began to look very thin and wan; and all for a simpleton.

Mr. Falcon prolonged his stay in the

neighbourhood, and drove a handsome dog-cart over twice a week to visit Mr. Lusignan.

He used to call on that gentleman at four o'clock, for at that hour Mr. Lusignan was always out, and his daughter always at home.

She was at home at that hour because she took her long walks in the morning. While her new admirer was in bed, or dressing, or breakfasting, she was springing along the road with all the elasticity of youth, and health, and native vigour, braced by daily exercise.

Twenty-one of these walks did she take, with no other result than health and appetite; but the twenty-second was more fertile; extremely fertile. Starting later than usual, she passed through Gravesend while Reginald Falcon was smoking at his front window. He saw her, and instantly doffed his dressing-gown, and donned his coat, to follow her. He was madly in love

with her, and, being a man who had learned to shoot pigeons, and opportunities, flying, he instantly resolved to join her in her walk, get her clear of the town, by the sea-beach, where beauty melts, and propose to her. Yes, marriage had not been hitherto his habit; but this girl was peerless: he was pledged by honour and gratitude to Phœbe Dale; but hang all that now. "No man should marry one woman when he loves another, it is dishonourable." He got into the street and followed her as fast as he could without running.

It was not so easy to catch her. Ladies are not built for running; but a fine, tall, symmetrical girl who has practised walking fast, can cover the ground wonderfully in walking—if she chooses. It was a sight to see how Rosa Lusignan squared her shoulders and stepped out from the waist, like a Canadian girl skating, while her elastic foot slapped the pavement as she spanked along.

She had nearly cleared the town before Falcon came up with her.

He was hardly ten yards from her when an unexpected incident occurred; she whisked round the corner of Bird Street, and ran plump against Christopher Staines; in fact, she darted into his arms, and her face almost touched the breast she had wounded so deeply.

CHAPTER IV.

Rosa cried "Oh!" and put up her hands to her face in lovely confusion, colouring like a peony.

"I beg your pardon," said Christopher, stiffly, but in a voice that trembled.

"No," said Rosa, "it was I ran against you. I walk so fast now. Hope I did not hurt you."

"Hurt me?"

"Well, then, frighten you?"

No answer.

"Oh, please, don't quarrel with me in the *street*," said Rosa, cunningly implying that he was the quarrelsome one. 'I am going on the beach. Good-bye." This adieu she uttered softly, and in a hesitating tone that

belied it. She started off, however, but much more slowly than she was going before; and, as she went, she turned her head with infinite grace, and kept looking askant down at the pavement two yards behind her: moreover she went close to the wall, and left room at her side for another to walk.

Christopher hesitated a moment; but the mute invitation, so arch yet timid, so pretty, tender, sly, and womanly, was too much for him, as it has generally proved for males, and the philosopher's foot was soon in the very place, to which the simpleton with the mere tail of her eye directed it.

They walked along side by side, in silence, Staines agitated, gloomy, confused, Rosa radiant and glowing; yet not knowing what to say for herself, and wanting Christopher to begin. So they walked along without a word.

Falcon followed them at some distance to see whether it was an admirer or only an

acquaintance—a lover he never dreamed of; she had shown such evident pleasure in his company, and had received his visits alone so constantly.

However, when the pair had got to the beach, and were walking slower and slower, he felt a pang of rage and jealousy, turned on his heel with an audible curse, and found Phœbe Dale a few yards behind him with a white face and a peculiar look. He knew what the look meant; he had brought it to that faithful face before to-day.

"You are better, Miss Lusignan."

"Better, Doctor Staines? I am health itself, thanks to——hem!"

"Our estrangement has agreed with you." This very bitterly.

"You know very well it is not that. Oh, please don't make me cry in the streets."

This humble petition, or rather meek threat, led to another long silence. It was

continued till they had nearly reached the shore. But, meantime, Rosa's furtive eyes scanned Christopher's face, and her conscience smote her at the signs of suffering. She felt a desire to beg his pardon with deep humility; but she suppressed that weakness. She hung her head with a pretty, sheepish air, and asked him if he could not think of something agreeable to say to one after deserting one so long.

"I am afraid not," said Christopher, bluntly, "I have an awkward habit of speaking the truth; and some people can't bear that, not even when it is spoken for their good."

"That depends on temper, and nerves, and things," said Rosa, deprecatingly; then softly, "I could bear anything from you now."

"Indeed!" said Christopher, grimly. "Well, then—I hear you had no sooner got rid of your old lover, for loving you too well, and telling you the truth, than you

took up another: some flimsy man of fashion, who will tell you any lie you like."

"It is a story, a wicked story," cried Rosa, thoroughly alarmed. "Me, a lover! He dances like an angel; I can't help that."

"Are his visits at your house like angels'; few and far between?" And the true lover's brow lowered black upon her for the first time.

Rosa changed colour, and her eyes fell a moment. "Ask papa," said she. "His father was an old friend of papa's."

"Rosa, you are prevaricating. Young men do not call on old gentlemen, when there is an attractive young lady in the house."

The argument was getting too close; so Rosa operated a diversion. "So," said she, with a sudden air of lofty disdain, swiftly and adroitly assumed, "you have had me watched."

"Not I; I only hear what people say."

"Listen to gossip, and not have me

watched! That shows how little you really cared for me. Well, if you had, you would have made a little discovery, that is all."

"Should I?" said Christopher, puzzled. "What?"

"I shall not tell you. Think what you please. Yes, sir, you would have found out that I take long walks every day, all alone; and what is more, that I walk through Gravesend, hoping—like a goose—that somebody really loved me, and would meet me, and beg my pardon; and if he had, I should have told him it was only my tongue, and my nerves, and things, my heart was his, and my gratitude; and after all, what do words signify, when I am a good, obedient girl at bottom: so that is what you have lost by not condescending to look after me—fine love!—Christopher, beg my pardon."

"May I enquire for what?"

"Why, for not understanding me; for

not knowing that I should be sorry the moment you were gone. I took them off the very next day, to please you."

"Took off whom?—oh, I understand. You did? Then you *are* a good girl."

"Didn't I tell you I was? A good, obedient girl; and anything but a flirt."

"I don't say that."

"But I do. Don't interrupt. It is to your good advice I owe my health; and to love anybody but you, when I owe you my love and my life, I must be a heartless, ungrateful, worthless —— Oh, Christopher, forgive me! No, no; I mean beg my pardon."

"I'll do both," said Christopher, taking her in his arms. "I beg your pardon, and I forgive you."

Rosa leaned her head tenderly on his shoulder, and began to sigh. "Oh dear, dear! I am a wicked, foolish girl: not fit to walk alone."

[illegible]ristopher spoke out,

and urged her to put an end to all these unhappy misunderstandings, and to his new torment, jealousy, by marrying him.

"And so I would this very minute, if papa would consent. But," said she, slily, "you never can be so foolish to wish it. What! a wise man like you marry a simpleton!"

"Did I ever call you that?" asked Christopher, reproachfully.

"No, dear; but you are the only one who has not: and, perhaps I should lose even the one if you were to marry me—oh, husbands are not so polite as lovers; I have observed that, simpleton or not."

Christopher assured her that he took quite a different view of her character; he believed her to be too profound for shallow people to read all in a moment: he even intimated that he himself had experienced no little difficulty in understanding her at odd times. "And so," said he, "they turn round upon you, and, instead of saying, 'We

are too shallow to fathom you,' they pretend you are a simpleton."

This solution of the mystery had never occurred to Rosa, nor indeed was it likely to occur to any creature less ingenious than a lover: it pleased her hugely; her fine eyes sparkled, and she nestled closer still to the strong arm that was to parry every ill, from mortal disease to galling epithets.

She listened with a willing ear to all his reasons, his hopes, his fears, and, when they reached her father's door, it was settled that he should dine there that day, and urge his suit to her father after dinner; she would implore the old gentleman to listen to it favourably.

The lovers parted, and Christopher went home like one who has awakened from a hideous dream to daylight and happiness.

He had not gone far before he met a dashing dog-cart driven by an exquisite. He turned to look after it, and saw it drive up to Kent Villa.

In a moment he divined his rival; and a sickness of heart came over him. But he recovered himself directly, and said, "If that is the fellow, she will not receive him now."

She did receive him though: at all events the dog-cart stood at the door, and its master remained inside.

Christopher stood, and counted the minutes: five—ten—fifteen—twenty minutes —and still the dog-cart stood there.

It was more than he could bear. He turned savagely, and strode back to Gravesend, resolving that all this torture should end that night, one way or other.

Phœbe Dale was the daughter of a farmer in Essex, and one of the happiest young women in England, till she knew Reginald Falcon, Esq.

She was reared on wholesome food, in wholesome air, and used to churn butter, make bread, cook a bit now and then, cut

out and sew all her own dresses, get up her own linen, make hay, ride anything on four legs; and for all that was a great reader, and taught in the Sunday-school to oblige the vicar; wrote a neat hand, and was a good arithmetician, kept all the house accounts and farm accounts. She was a musician too—not profound, but very correct; she would take her turn at the harmonium in church, and, when she was there, you never heard a wrong note in the bass, nor an inappropriate flourish, nor bad time. She could sing too, but never would, except her part in a psalm. Her voice was a deep contralto, and she chose to be ashamed of this heavenly organ, because a pack of envious girls had giggled and said it was like a man's.

In short, her natural ability, and the range and variety of her useful accomplishments, were considerable; not that she was a prodigy; but she belonged to a small class of women in this island, who are not too high

to use their arms, nor too low to cultivate their minds; and, having a faculty and a habit, deplorably rare amongst her sex, viz., Attention, she had profited by her miscellaneous advantages.

Her figure and face both told her breed at once: here was an old English pastoral beauty; not the round-backed, narrow-chested cottager, but the well-fed, erect rustic, with broad, full bust, and massive shoulder, and arm as hard as a rock with health and constant use; a hand finely cut, though neither small nor very white, and just a little hard inside, compared with Luxury's soft palm; a face honest, fair, and rather large than small; not beautiful, but exceeding comely; a complexion not pink and white, but that delicately-blended, brick-dusty colour, which tints the whole cheek in fine gradation, outlasts other complexions twenty years, and beautifies the true Northern, even in old age. Grey, limpid, honest, point-blank, searching eyes;

hair true nut-brown, without a shade of red or black, and a high smooth forehead, full of sense. Across it ran one deep wrinkle that did not belong to her youth; that wrinkle was the brand of trouble, the line of agony. It had come of loving above her, yet below her; and of loving an egotist.

Three years before our tale commenced, a gentleman's horse ran away with him, and threw him on a heap of stones by the road-side, not very far from Farmer Dale's gate. The farmer had him taken in: the doctor said he must not be moved. He was insensible; his cheek like delicate wax; his fair hair like silk stained with blood. He became Phœbe's patient, and, in due course, her convalescent: his pale handsome face, and fascinating manners, gained one charm more from weakness; his vices were in abeyance.

The womanly nurse's heart yearned over her child; for he was feeble as a child; and, when he got well enough to amuse

his weary hours by making love to her, and telling her a pack of arrant lies, she was a ready dupe. He was to marry her as soon as ever his old uncle died, and left him the means, &c., &c. At last he got well enough to leave her, and went away, her open admirer, and secret lover. He borrowed twenty pounds of her the day he left.

He used to write her charming letters, and feed the flame: but one day her father sent her up to London, on his own business, all of a sudden; and she called on Mr. Falcon at his real address. She found he did not live there—only received letters. However, half-a-crown soon bought his real address, and thither Phœbe proceeded, with a troubled heart, for she suspected that her true lover was in debt, or troubled, and obliged to hide. Well, he must be got out of it, and hide at the farm meantime.

So the loving girl knocked at the door, asked for Mr. Falcon, and was shown in to

a lady rather showily dressed, who asked her business.

Phœbe Dale stared at her, and then turned pale as ashes. She was paralysed, and could not find her tongue.

"Why, what is the matter now?" said the other, sharply.

"Are you married to Reginald Falcon?"

"Of course I am. Look at my wedding-ring."

"Then I am not wanted here," faltered Phœbe, ready to sink on the floor.

"Certainly not, if you are one of the by-gones," said the woman, coarsely; and Phœbe Dale waited to hear no more, but found her way, heaven knows how, into the street, and there leaned, half-fainting, on a rail, till a policeman came and told her she had been drinking, and suggested a cool cell as the best cure.

"Not drink; only a breaking heart," said she, in her low mellow voice that few could resist.

He got her a glass of water, drove away the boys that congregated directly, and she left the street. But she soon came back again, and waited about for Reginald Falcon.

It was night when he appeared. She seized him by the breast, and taxed him with his villainy.

What with her iron grasp, pale face, and flashing eyes, he lost his cool impudence, and blurted out excuses. It was an old and unfortunate connection; he would give the world to dissolve it, if he could do it like a gentleman.

Phœbe told him to please himself: he must part with one or the other.

"Don't talk nonsense," said this man of brass; "I'll un-Falcon her on the spot."

"Very well," said Phœbe. "I am going home; and if you are not there by to-morrow at noon——" She said no more, but looked a great deal. Then she departed, and refused him her hand at parting. "We will see about that by-and-by," said she.

At noon my lord came down to the farm, and, unfortunately for Phœbe, played the penitent so skilfully for about a month that she forgave him, and loved him all the more for having so nearly parted with him.

Her peace was not to endure long. He was detected in an intrigue in the very village.

The insult struck so home that Phœbe herself, to her parents' satisfaction, ordered him out of the house at once.

But, when he was gone, she had fits of weeping, and could settle to nothing for a long time.

Months had elapsed, and she was getting a sort of dull tranquillity, when one evening, taking a walk she had often taken with him, and mourning her solitude and wasted affection, he waylaid her, and clung to her knees, and shed crocodile tears on her hands, and, after a long resistance, violent at first, but fainter and fainter, got her in his power again, and that so completely that she met

him several times by night, being ashamed to be seen with him in those parts by day.

This ended in fresh promises of marriage, and in a constant correspondence by letter. This pest knew exactly how to talk to a woman, and how to write to one. His letters fed the unhappy flame: and, mind you, he sometimes deceived himself, and thought he loved her; but it was only himself he loved. She was an invaluable lover; a faithful, disinterested friend; hers was a vile bargain; his an excellent one, and he clung to it.

And so they went on. She detected him in another infidelity, and reproached him bitterly; but she had no longer the strength to break with him. Nevertheless, this time she had the sense to make a struggle. She implored him, on her very knees, to show her a little mercy, in return for all her love. "For pity's sake, leave me!" she cried. "You are strong, and I am weak. You can end it for ever; and pray do. You don't

want me; you don't value me: then leave me, once and for all, and end this hell you keep me in."

No; he could not, or he would not, leave her alone. Look at a bird's wings!—how like an angel's! Yet so vile a thing as a bit of birdlime subdues them utterly; and such was the fascinating power of this mean man over this worthy woman. She was a reader, a thinker, a model of respectability, industry, and sense; a business-woman, keen and practical; could encounter sharp hands in sharp trades; could buy or sell hogs, calves, or beasts with any farmer or butcher in the country; yet no match for a cunning fool. She had enshrined an idol in her heart, and that heart adored it, and clung to it, though the superior head saw through it, dreaded it, despised it.

No wonder three years of this had drawn a tell-tale wrinkle across the polished brow.

Phœbe Dale had not received a letter for

some days: that roused her suspicion and stung her jealousy; she came up to London by fast train, and down to Gravesend directly.

She had a thick veil, that concealed her features; and, with a little inquiring and bribing, she soon found out that Mr. Falcon was there with a showy dog-cart. "Ah!" thought Phœbe, "he has won a little money at play, or pigeon-shooting; so now he has no need of me."

She took lodgings opposite him, but observed nothing till this very morning, when she saw him throw off his dressing-gown all in a hurry, and fling on his coat. She tied on her bonnet as rapidly, and followed him, until she discovered the object of his pursuit. It was a surprise to her, and a puzzle, to see another man step in, as if to take her part. But as Reginald still followed the loitering pair, she followed Reginald, till he turned and found her at his heels, white and lowering.

She confronted him in threatening silence for some time, during which he prepared his defence.

"So it is a *lady* this time," said she, in her low, rich voice, sternly.

"Is it?"

"Yes, and I should say she is bespoke. That tall, fine-built gentleman. But I suppose you care no more for his feelings than you do for mine."

"Phœbe," said the egotist, "I will not try to deceive you. You have often said you are my true friend."

"And I think I have proved it."

"That you have. Well, then, be my true friend now. I am in love—really in love—this time. You and I only torment each other; let us part friends. There are plenty of farmers in Essex that would jump at you. As for me, I'll tell you the truth; I have run through every farthing; my estate mortgaged beyond its value—two or three writs out against me—that is why I slipped

down here. My only chance is to marry Money. Her father knows I have land, and he knows nothing about the mortgages; she is his only daughter. Don't stand in my way, that is a good girl; be my friend, as you always were. Hang it all, Phœbe, can't you say a word to a fellow that is driven into a corner, instead of glaring at me like that; there, I know it is ungrateful —but what can a fellow do? I must live like a gentleman, or else take a dose of prussic acid; you don't want to drive me to that. Why you proposed to part, last time, yourself."

She gave him one majestic, indescribable look, that made even his callous heart quiver, and turned away.

Then the scamp admired her for despising him, and could not bear to lose her. He followed her, and put forth all those powers of persuading and soothing, which had so often proved irresistible. But this time it was in vain. The insult was too savage,

and his egotism too brutal, for honeyed phrases to blind her.

After enduring it a long time with a silent shudder, she turned and shook him fiercely off her like some poisonous reptile.

"Do you want me to kill you? I'd liever kill myself for loving such a thing as *thou*. Go thy ways, man, and let me go mine." In her passion she dropped her cultivation for once, and went back to the thou and thee of her grandam.

He coloured up, and looked spiteful enough; but he soon recovered his cynical egotism, and went off whistling an operatic passage.

She crept to her lodgings, and buried her face in her pillow, and rocked herself to and fro for hours in the bitterest agony the heart can feel, groaning over her great affection wasted, flung into the dirt.

While she was thus, she heard a little commotion. She came to the window and saw Falcon, exquisit[illegible]d, drive off in

his dog-cart, attended by the acclamations of eight boys. She saw at a glance he was gone courting; her knees gave way under her, and, such is the power of the mind, this stalwart girl lay weak as water on the sofa, and had not the power to go home, though just then she had but one wish, one hope, to see her idol's face no more, nor hear his wheedling tongue, that had ruined her peace.

The exquisite Mr. Falcon was received by Rosa Lusignan with a certain tremor, that flattered his hopes. He told her, in charming language, how he had admired her at first sight, then esteemed her, then loved her.

She blushed, and panted, and showed more than once a desire to interrupt him, but was too polite. She heard him out, with rising dismay, and he offered her his hand and heart.

But, by this time, she had made up her

mind what to say. "Oh, Mr. Falcon," she cried, "how can you speak to me in this way? Why, I am engaged. Didn't you know?"

"No; I am sure you are not; or you would never have given me the encouragement you have."

"Oh, all engaged young ladies flirt—a little; and everybody here knows I am engaged to Dr. Staines."

"Why I never saw him here."

Rosa's tact was a quality that came and went; so she blushed, and faltered out, "We had a little tiff, as lovers will."

"And you did me the honour to select me as catspaw to bring him on again. Was not that rather heartless?"

Rosa's fitful tact returned to her.

"Oh, sir, do not think so ill of me. I am not heartless, I am only unwise: and you are so superior to the people about you; I could not help appreciating you, and I thought you knew I was engaged, and so I was less [illegible]. I hope I shall not lose your

esteem, though I have no right to anything more. Ah! I see by your face I have behaved very ill; pray forgive me."

And, with this, she turned on the waters of the Nile; better known to you, perhaps, as "crocodile tears."

Falcon was a gentleman on the surface, and knew he should only make matters worse by quarrelling with her. So he ground his teeth, and said, "May your own heart never feel the pangs you have inflicted. I shall love you, and remember you till my dying day."

He bowed ceremoniously, and left her. "Ay," said he to himself, "I *will* remember you, you heartless jilt, and the man you have jilted me for. Staines is his d——d name, is it?"

He drove back crestfallen, bitter, and, for once in his life, heartsick, and drew up at his lodgings. Here he found attendants waiting to receive him.

A sheriff's officer took his dog-cart and

horse, under a judgment; the disturbance this caused collected a tidy crowd, gaping and grinning, and brought Phœbe's white face, and eyes swollen with weeping, to the window.

Falcon saw her, and brazened it out. "Take them," said he, with an oath. "I'll have a better turn-out by to-morrow, breakfast-time."

The crowd cheered him for his spirit.

He got down, lit a cigar, chaffed the officer and the crowd, and was, on the whole, admired.

Then another officer, who had been hunting him in couples with the other, stepped forward and took *him*, for the balance of a judgment debt.

Then the swell's cigar fell out of his mouth, and he was seriously alarmed. "Why, Cartwright," said he, "this is too bad. You promised not to see me this month. You passed me full in the Strand."

"You are mistaken, sir," said Cartwright,

with sullen irony, "I've got a twin-brother; a many takes him for me, till they finds the difference." Then, lowering his voice, "What call had you to boast in your club you had made it right with Bill Cartwright, and he'd never see you? That got about, and so I was bound to see you, or lose my bread. There's one or two I don't see, but then they are real gentlemen, and thinks of me as well as theirselves, and doesn't blab."

"I must have been drunk," said Falcon, apologetically.

"More likely blowing a cloud. When you young gents gets a smoking together, you'd tell on your own mothers. Come along, colonel, off we go to Merrimashee."

"Why it is only twenty-six pounds. I have paid the rest."

"More than that; there's the costs."

"Come in, and I'll settle it."

"All right, sir; Jem, watch the back."

"Oh, I shall not try that game with a sharp hand like you, Cartwright."

"You had better not, sir," said Cartwright; but he was softened a little by the compliment.

When they were alone, Falcon began by saying it was a bad job for him.

"Why, I thought you was a going to pay it all in a moment."

"I can't; but I have got a friend over the way, that could, if she chose. She has always got money, somehow."

"Oh, if it is a she, it is all right."

"I don't know. She has quarrelled with me; but give me a little time. Here, have a glass of sherry and a biscuit, while I try it on."

Having thus muffled Cartwright, this man of the world opened his window, and looked out. The crowd had followed the captured dog-cart, so he had the street to himself. He beckoned to Phœbe, and, after considerable hesitation, she opened her window.

"Phœbe," said he, in tones of tender

regret, admirably natural and sweet; "I shall never offend you again; so forgive me this once. I have given that girl up."

"Not you," said Phœbe, sullenly.

"Indeed I have. After our quarrel, I started to propose to her; but I had not the heart; I came back and left her."

"Time will show. If it is not her, it will be some other, you false, heartless villain."

"Come, I say, don't be so hard on me in trouble. I am going to prison."

"So I suppose."

"Ah, but it is worse than you think. I am only taken for a paltry thirty pounds or so."

"Thirty-three, fifteen five," suggested Cartwright, in a muffled whisper, his mouth being full of biscuit.

"But once they get me to a sponging-house, detainers will pour in, and my cruel creditors will confine me for life."

"It is the best place for you. It will

put a stop to your wickedness; and I shall be at peace. That's what I have never known, night or day, this three years."

"But you will not be happy if you see me go to prison before your eyes. Were you ever inside a prison? Just think what it must be to be cooped up in those cold grim cells, all alone; for they use a debtor like a criminal now."

Phœbe shuddered; but she said, bravely, "Well, tell *them* you have been a-courting. There was a time I'd have died, sooner than see a hair of your head hurt; but it is all over now, you have worn me out."

Then she began to cry.

Falcon heaved a deep sigh. "It is no more than I deserve," said he. "I'll pack up my things, and go with the officer. Give me one kind word at parting, and I'll think of it in my prison, night and day."

He withdrew from the window with another deep sigh, told Cartwright, cheer-

fully, it was all right, and proceeded to pack up his traps.

Meantime Phœbe sat at her window, and cried bitterly. Her words had been braver than her heart.

Falcon managed to pay the trifle he owed for the lodgings, and presently he came out with Cartwright, and the attendant called a cab. His things were thrown in, and Cartwright invited him to follow. Then he looked up and cast a genuine look of terror and misery at Phœbe. He thought she would have relented before this.

Her heart gave way; I am afraid it would, even without that piteous and mute appeal. She opened the window, and asked Mr. Cartwright if he would be good enough to come and speak to her.

Cartwright committed his prisoner to the subordinate, and knocked at the door of Phœbe's lodgings. She came down herself and let him in. She led the way up-stairs, motioned him to a seat, sat down by him,

and began to cry again. She was thoroughly unstrung.

Cartwright was human, and muttered some words of regret that a poor fellow must do his duty.

"Oh, it is not that," sobbed Phœbe. "I can find the money. I have found more for him than that, many's the time." Then, drying her eyes, "But you must know the world, and I dare say you can see how 'tis with me."

"I can," said Cartwright, gravely; "I overheard you and him: and, my girl, if you take my advice, why let him go. He is a gentleman skin deep, and dresses well, and can palaver a girl, no doubt; but bless your heart, I can see at a glance he is not worth your little finger, an honest, decent young woman like you. Why it is like butter fighting with stone. Let him go; or I will tell you what it is, you will hang for him some day, or else make away with yourself."

"Ay, sir," said Phœbe, "that's likelier; and if I was to let him go to prison, I should sit me down and think of his parting look, and I should fling myself into the water for him before I was a day older."

"Ye mustn't do that anyway. While there's life there's hope."

Upon this Phœbe put him a question, and found him ready to do anything for her, in reason—provided he was paid for it. And the end of it all was, the prisoner was conveyed to London; Phœbe got the requisite sum; Falcon was deposited in a third-class carriage bound for Essex. Phœbe paid his debt, and gave Cartwright a present, and away rattled the train conveying the handsome egotist into temporary retirement, to wit, at a village five miles from the Dale's farm. She was too ashamed of her young gentleman and herself to be seen with him in her native village. On the road down he was full of little practical attentions; she received them coldly; his

mellifluous mouth was often at her ear, pouring thanks and praises into it; she never vouchsafed a word of reply. All she did was to shudder now and then, and cry at intervals. Yet, whenever he left her side, her whole body became restless; and, when he came back to her, a furtive thrill announced the insane complacency his bare contact gave her. Surely, of all the forms in which love torments the heart, this was the most terrible and pitiable.

Mr. Lusignan found his daughter in tears.

"Why, what is the matter now?" said he, a little peevishly. "We have had nothing of this sort of thing lately."

"Papa, it is because I have misconducted myself. I am a foolish, imprudent girl; I have been flirting with Mr. Falcon, and he has taken a *cruel* advantage of it—proposed to me—this very afternoon—actually!"

"Has he? Well, he is a fine fellow; and has a landed estate in Norfolk. There's nothing like land. They may well call it real property—there is something to show; you can walk on it, and ride on it, and look out of window at it: that *is* property."

"Oh, papa! What are you saying? Would you have me marry one man, when I belong to another?"

"But you don't belong to any one—except to me."

"Oh yes I do. I belong to my dear Christopher."

"Why you dismissed him before my very eyes; and very ill you behaved, begging your pardon. The man was your able physician, and your best friend, and said nothing that was not for your good; and you treated him like a dog."

"Yes, but he has apologized."

"What for? being treated like a dog?"

"Oh, don't say so, papa! At all events,

he has apologized, as a gentleman should whenever—whenever——"

"Whenever a lady is in the wrong."

"Don't, papa; and I have asked him to dinner."

"With all my heart. I shall be downright glad to see him again. You used him abominably."

"But you need not keep saying so," whined Rosa. "And that is not all, dear papa; the worst of it is, Mr. Falcon proposing to me has opened my eyes. I am not fit to be trusted alone. I am too fond of dancing, and flirting will follow somehow. Oh, think how ill I was a few months ago, and how unhappy you were about me. They were killing me. He came and saved me. Yes, papa, I owe all this health and strength to Christopher. I did take them off, the very next day, and see the effect of it, and my long walks; I owe him my life, and, what I value far more, my good looks—la! I wish I had not

told you that—and after all this don't I belong to my Christopher? How could I be happy, or respect myself, if I married any one else? And, oh, papa, he looks wan and worn. He has been fretting for his simpleton; oh, dear, I mustn't think of that—it makes me cry; and you don't like scenes, do you?"

"Hate 'em."

"Well then," said Rosa, coaxingly, "I'll tell you how to end them. Marry your simpleton to the only man who is fit to take care of her. Oh, papa, think of his deep, deep affection for me, and pray don't snub him if—by any chance—after dinner—he should *happen* to ask you—something."

"Oh, then it is possible that, by the merest chance, the gentleman you have accidentally asked to dinner, may, by some strange fortuity, be surprised into asking me a second time for something very much resembling my daughter's hand—eh?"

Rosa coloured high. "He might, you

know. How can I tell what gentlemen will say, when the ladies have retired, and they are left alone with—with——"

"With the bottle. Ay, that's true: when the wine is in, the wit is out."

Said Rosa, "Well, if he should happen to be so foolish, pray think of *me;* of all we owe him, and how much I love him, and ought to love him." She then bestowed a propitiatory kiss, and ran off to dress for dinner: it was a much longer operation to-day than usual.

Dr. Staines was punctual. Mr. Lusignan commented favourably on that.

"He always is," said Rosa, eagerly.

They dined together; Mr. Lusignan chatted freely, but Staines and Rosa were under a feeling of restraint, Staines in particular; he could not help feeling that before long his fate must be settled. He would either obtain Rosa's hand, or have to resign her to some man of fortune who would step in; for beauty such as hers

could not long lack brilliant offers. Longing, though dreading, to know his fate, he was glad when dinner ended.

Rosa sat with them a little while after dinner, then rose, bestowed another propitiatory kiss on her father's head, and retired with a modest blush, and a look at Christopher that was almost divine.

It inspired him with the courage of lions, and he commenced the attack at once.

CHAPTER V.

"MR. LUSIGNAN," said he, "the last time I was here you gave me some hopes that you might be prevailed on to trust that angel's health and happiness to my care."

"Well, Dr. Staines, I will not beat about the bush with you. My judgment is still against this marriage; you need not look so alarmed; it does not follow I shall forbid it. I feel I have hardly a right to, for my Rosa might be in her grave now but for you; and, another thing, when I interfered between you two I had no proof you were a man of ability; I had only your sweetheart's word for that; and I never knew a case before where a young lady's

swan did not turn out a goose. Your rare ability gives you another chance in the professional battle that is before you; indeed, it puts a different face on the whole matter. I still think it premature. Come now, would it not be much wiser to wait, and secure a good practice, before you marry a mere child? There—there—I only advise; I don't dictate: you shall settle it together, you two wiseacres. Only I must make one positive condition; I have nothing to give my child during my lifetime; but one thing I have done for her; years ago I insured my life for six thousand pounds; and you must do the same. I will not have her thrown on the world a widow, with a child or two, perhaps, to support, and not a farthing; you know the insecurity of mortal life."

"I do, I do. Why of course I will insure my life, and pay the annual premium out of my little capital, until income flows in."

"Will you hand me over a sum sufficient to pay that premium for five years?"

"With pleasure."

"Then I fear," said the old gentleman, with a sigh, "my opposition to the match must cease here. I still recommend you to wait; but—there, I might just as well advise fire and tow to live neighbours, and keep cool."

To show the injustice of this simile, Christopher Staines started up, with his eyes all a-glow, and cried out rapturously, "Oh, sir; may I tell her?"

"Yes, you may tell her," said Lusignan, with a smile. "Stop—what are you going to tell her?"

"That you consent, sir. God bless you! God bless you! Oh!"

"Yes, but that I advise you to wait."

"I'll tell her all," said Staines, and rushed out even as he spoke, and upset a heavy chair with a loud thud.

"Ah! ah!" cried the old gentleman in

dismay, and put his fingers in his ears—too late. "I see," said he, "there will be no peace and quiet now till they are out of the house." He lighted a soothing cigar to counteract the fracas.

"Poor little Rosa—a child but yesterday; and now to encounter the cares of a wife, and, perhaps, a mother. Ah! she is but young, but young."

The old gentleman prophesied truly; from that moment he had no peace, till he withdrew all semblance of dissent, and even of procrastination.

Christopher insured his life for six thousand pounds, and assigned the policy to his wife. Four hundred pounds was handed to Mr. Lusignan to pay the premiums until the genius of Dr. Staines should have secured him that large professional income, which does not come all at once, even to the rare physician, who is Capax, Efficax, Sagax.

The wedding-day was named. The brides-

maids were selected; the guests invited. None refused but Uncle Philip. He declined, in his fine bold hand, to countenance in person an act of folly he disapproved. Christopher put his letter away with a momentary sigh, and would not show it Rosa. All other letters they read together, charming pastime of that happy period. Presents poured in. Silver teapots, coffee-pots, sugar-basins, cream-jugs, fruit-dishes, silver-gilt inkstands, albums, photograph-books, little candlesticks, choice little services of china, shell salt-cellars, in a case lined with maroôn velvet; a Bible, superb in binding and clasps, and everything, but the text—that was illegible; a silk scarf from Benares; a gold chain from Delhi, six feet long or nearly; a Maltese necklace, a ditto in exquisite filigree from Genoa; English brooches, a trifle too big and brainless; apostle spoons, a treble-lined parasol with ivory stick and handle; an ivory card-case, richly carved; work-box of sandal-wood and ivory, &c.

Mr. Lusignan's City friends, as usual with these gentlemen, sent the most valuable things. Every day one or two packages were delivered, and in opening them Rosa invariably uttered a peculiar scream of delight, and her father put his fingers in his ears; yet there was music in this very scream, if he would only have listened to it candidly, instead of fixing his mind on his vague theory of screams—so formed was she to please the ear as well as the eye.

At last came a parcel she opened and stared at, smiling, and colouring like a rose, but did not scream, being too dumb-foundered and perplexed; for lo! a teapot of some base material, but simple and elegant in form, being an exact reproduction of a melon; and inside this teapot a canvas bag containing ten guineas in silver, and a wash-leather bag containing twenty guineas in gold, and a slip of paper, which Rosa, being now half recovered from her stupe-

faction, read out to her father and Dr. Staines:

"People that buy presents blindfold give duplicates and triplicates; and men seldom choose to a woman's taste; so be pleased to accept the enclosed tea-leaves, and buy for yourself. The teapot you can put on the hob, for it is Nickel."

Rosa looked sore puzzled again. "Papa," said she, timidly, "have we any friend that is—a little—deranged?"

"A lot."

"Oh, then, that accounts."

"Why no, love," said Christopher. "I have heard of much learning making a man mad, but never of much good sense."

"What! Do you call this sensible?"

"Don't you?"

"I'll read it again," said Rosa. "Well—yes—I declare—it is not so mad as I thought; but it is very eccentric."

Lusignan suggested there was nothing so eccentric as common sense, especially in time of wedding. "This," said he, "comes from the City. It is a friend of mine, some old fox: he is throwing dust in your eyes with his reasons; his real reason was that his time is money; it would have cost the old rogue a hundred pounds' worth of time —you know the City, Christopher—to go out and choose the girl a present; so he has sent his clerk out with a cheque to buy a pewter teapot, and fill it with specie."

"Pewter!" cried Rosa. "No such thing! It's Nickel. What is Nickel, I wonder?"

The handwriting afforded no clue, so there the discussion ended: but it was a nice little mystery, and very convenient; made conversation. Rosa had many an animated discussion about it with her female friends.

The wedding-day came at last. The sun shone—*actually*, as Rosa observed. The carriages drove up. The bridesmaids, principally old schoolfellows and impassioned

correspondents of Rosa, were pretty, and dressed alike, and delightfully; but the bride was peerless; her southern beauty literally shone in that white satin dress and veil, and her head was regal with the crown of orange blossoms. Another crown she had, true virgin modesty. A low murmur burst from the men the moment they saw her; the old women forgave her beauty on the spot, and the young women almost pardoned it; she was so sweet and womanly, and so sisterly to her own sex.

When they started for the church she began to tremble, she scarce knew why; and, when the solemn words were said, and the ring was put on her finger, she cried a little, and looked half imploringly at her bridesmaids once, as if scared at leaving them for an untried and mysterious life with no woman near.

They were married. Then came the breakfast, that hour of uneasiness and blushing to such a bride as this; but at

last she was released. She sped up-stairs, thanking goodness it was over. Down came her last box. The bride followed, in a plain travelling dress, which her glorious eyes and brows, and her rich glowing cheeks, seemed to illumine: she was handed into the carriage, the bridegroom followed. All the young guests clustered about the door, armed with white shoes—slippers are gone by.

They started; the ladies flung their white shoes right and left with religious impartiality, except that not one of their missiles went at the object. The men, more skilful, sent a shower on to the roof of the carriage, which is the lucky spot. The bride kissed her hand, and managed to put off crying, though it cost her a struggle. The party hurrahed; enthusiastic youths gathered fallen shoes, and ran and hurled them again, with cheerful yells, and away went the happy pair, the bride leaning sweetly and confidingly with both her white hands on

the bridegroom's shoulder, while he dried the tears that would run now at leaving home and parent for ever; and kissed her often, and encircled her with his strong arm, and murmured comfort, and love, and pride, and joy, and sweet vows of life-long tenderness into her ears, that soon stole nearer his lips to hear, and the fair cheek grew softly to his shoulder.

CHAPTER VI.

DR. STAINES and Mrs. Staines visited France, Switzerland, and the Rhine, and passed a month of Elysium before they came to London to face their real destiny and fight the battle of life.

And here, methinks, a reader of novels may, perhaps, cry out and say, "What manner of man is this, who marries his hero and heroine, and then, instead of leaving them happy for life, and at rest from his uneasy pen and all their other troubles, flows coolly on with their adventures?"

To this I can only reply that the old English novel is no rule to me, and Life is; and I respectfully propose an experiment; catch eight old married people, four of each

sex, and say unto them, "Sir," or "Madam, did the more remarkable events of your life come to you before marriage, or after?" Most of them will say "after," and let that be my excuse for treating the marriage of Christopher Staines and Rosa Lusignan as merely one incident in their lives; an incident which, so far from ending their story, led by degrees to more striking events, than any that occurred to them before they were man and wife.

They returned, then, from their honey tour, and Staines, who was methodical, and kept a diary, made the following entry therein:—

"We have now a life of endurance, and self-denial, and economy before us; we have to rent a house, and furnish it, and live in it, until professional income shall flow in and make all things easy: and we have two thousand five hundred pounds left to do it with."

They came to a family hotel, and Dr.

Staines went out, directly after breakfast, to look for a house. Acting on a friend's advice, he visited the streets and places north of Oxford Street, looking for a good commodious house adapted to his business. He found three or four at fair rents, neither cheap nor dear, the district being respectable and rather wealthy, but no longer fashionable. He came home with his notes, and found Rosa, beaming in a crisp *peignoir*, and her lovely head its natural size and shape, high-bred and elegant. He sat down, and with her hand in his proceeded to describe the houses to her, when a waiter threw open the door—"Mrs. John Cole."

"Florence!" cried Rosa, starting up.

In flowed Florence: they both uttered a little squawk of delight, and went at each other like two little tigresses, and kissed in swift alternation with a singular ardour, drawing their crests back like snakes, and then darting them forward and inflicting what, to the male philosopher looking on, seemed

hard kisses, violent kisses, rather than the tender ones to be expected from two tender creatures embracing each other.

"Darling," said Rosa, "I knew you would be the first. Didn't I tell you so, Christopher?—My husband—my darling Florry! Sit down, love, and tell me everything; he has just been looking out for a house. Ah! you have got all that over long ago: she has been married six months. Florry, you are handsomer than ever; and what a beautiful dress! Ah, London is the place. Real Brussels, I declare;" and she took hold of her friend's lace, and gloated on it.

Christopher smiled good-naturedly, and said, "I dare say you ladies have a good deal to say to each other."

"Oceans," said Rosa.

"I will go and hunt houses again."

"There's a good husband," said Mrs. Cole, as soon as the door closed on him: "and such a fine man. Why he must be

six feet. Mine is rather short. But he is very good; refuses me nothing. My will is law."

"That is all right, you are so sensible: but I want governing a little: and I like it—actually; did the dressmaker find it, dear?"

"Oh no. I had it by me. I bought it at Brussels, on our wedding tour: it is dearer there than in London."

She said this as if "dearer" and "better" were synonymous.

"But about your house, Rosie, dear?"

"Yes, darling, I'll tell you all about it. I never saw a moire this shade before; I don't care for them in general; but this is so *distingué*."

Florence rewarded her with a kiss.

"The house," said Rosa. "Oh, he has seen one in Portman Street, and one in Gloucester Place."

"Oh, that will never do," cried Mrs. Cole. "It is no use being a physician in

those out-of-the-way places. He must be in Mayfair."

"Must he?"

"Of course. Besides, then my Johnnie can call him in, when they are just going to die. Johnnie is a general prac., and makes two thousand a year; and he shall call your one in; but he must live in Mayfair. Why, Rosie, you would not be such a goose as to live in those places? they are quite gone by."

"I shall do whatever you advise me, dear. Oh, what a comfort to have a dear friend: and six months married, and knows things. How richly it is trimmed! Why, it is nearly all trimmings."

"That is the fashion."

"Oh!"

And, after that big word, there was no more to be said.

These two ladies in their conversation gravitated towards dress, and fell flat on it every half minute. That great and elevat-

ing topic held them by a silken cord, but it allowed them to flutter upwards into other topics; and in those intervals, numerous though brief, the lady, who had been married six months, found time to instruct the matrimonial novice, with great authority, and even a shade of pomposity. "My dear, the way ladies and gentlemen get a house —in the first place, you don't go about yourself like that, and you never go to the people themselves—or you are sure to be taken in—but to a respectable house agent."

"Yes, dear, that must be the best way, one would think."

"Of course it is; and you ask for a house in Mayfair, and he shows you several, and recommends you the best, and sees you are not cheated."

"Thank you, love," said Rosa: "now I know what to do; I'll not forget a word. And the train so beautifully shaped! Ah, it is only in London or Paris they can make a dress flow behind like that," &c., &c.

Dr. Staines came back to dinner in good spirits; he had found a house in Harewood Square; good entrance hall, where his gratuitous patients might sit on benches; good dining-room, where his superior patients might wait; and good library, to be used as a consulting-room. Rent only £85 per annum.

But Rosa told him that would never do; a physician must be in the fashionable part of the town.

"Eventually," said Christopher; "but surely at first starting—and you know they say little boats should not go too far from shore."

Then Rosa repeated all her friend's arguments, and seemed so unhappy at the idea of not living near her, that Staines, who had not yet said the hard word "no" to her, gave in; consoling his prudence with the reflection that, after all, Mr. Cole could put many a guinea in his way, for Mr. Cole was middle-aged—though his wife

was young—and had really a very large practice.

So next day, the newly-wedded pair called on a house agent in Mayfair, and his son and partner went with them to several places. The rents of houses equal to that in Harewood Square were £300 a year at least, and a premium to boot.

Christopher told him these were quite beyond the mark. "Very well," said the agent. "Then I'll show you a Bijou."

Rosa clapped her hands. "That is the thing for us. We don't want a large house, only a beautiful one, and in Mayfair."

"Then the Bijou will be sure to suit you."

He took them to the Bijou.

The Bijou had a small dining-room with one very large window in two sheets of plate glass, and a projecting balcony full of flowers; a still smaller library, which opened on a square yard enclosed. Here were a great many pots, with flowers dead

or dying from neglect. On the first floor a fair-sized drawing-room, and a tiny one at the back: on the second floor, one good bedroom, and a dressing-room, or little bedroom: three garrets above.

Rosa was in ecstacies. "It is a nest," said she.

"It is a bank-note," said the agent, stimulating equal enthusiasm, after his fashion. "You can always sell the lease again for more money."

Christopher kept cool. "I don't want a house to sell, but to live in, and do my business; I am a physician: now the drawing-room is built over the entrance to a mews; the back rooms all look into a mews: we shall have the eternal noise and smell of a mews. My wife's rest will be broken by the carriages rolling in and out. The hall is fearfully small and stuffy. The rent is abominably high; and what is the premium for, I wonder?"

"Always a premium in Mayfair, sir. A

lease is property here: the gentleman is not acquainted with this part, madam."

"Oh yes, he is," said Rosa, as boldly as a six years' wife: "he knows everything."

"Then he knows that a house of this kind at £130 a-year, in Mayfair, is a bank-note."

Staines turned to Rosa. "The poor patients, where am I to receive them?"

"In the stable," suggested the house agent.

"Oh!" said Rosa, shocked.

"Well, then, the coach-house. Why there's plenty of room for a brougham, and one horse, and fifty poor patients at a time: beggars mus'n't be choosers; if you give them physic gratis, that is enough: you ain't bound to find 'em a palace to sit down in, and hot coffee and rump-steaks all round, Doctor."

This tickled Rosa so that she burst out laughing, and thenceforward giggled at

intervals, wit of this refined nature having all the charm of novelty for her.

They inspected the stables, which were indeed the one redeeming feature in the horrid little Bijou: and then the agent would show them the kitchen, and the new stove. He expatiated on this to Mrs. Staines. "Cook a dinner for thirty people, madam."

"And there's room for them to eat it—in the road," said Staines.

The agent reminded him there were larger places to be had, by a very simple process, viz., paying for them.

Staines thought of the large, comfortable house in Harewood Square. "One hundred and thirty pounds a-year for this poky little hole?" he groaned.

"Why it is nothing at all for a Bijou."

"But it is too much for a Bandbox."

Rosa laid her hand on his arm, with an imploring glance.

"Well," said he, "I'll submit to the

rent, but I really cannot give the premium, it is too ridiculous. He ought to bribe me to rent it, not I him."

"Can't be done without, sir."

"Well, I'll give £100 and no more."

"Impossible, sir."

"Then good morning. Now, dearest, just come and see the house at Harewood Square; £85 and no premium."

"Will you oblige me with your address, Doctor?" said the agent.

"Dr. Staines, Morley's Hotel."

And so they left Mayfair.

Rosa sighed, and said, "Oh, the nice little place; and we have lost it for £200."

"Two hundred pounds is a great deal for us to throw away."

"Being near, the Coles would soon have made that up to you: and such a cosy little nest."

"Well, the house will not run away."

"But somebody is sure to snap it up. It is a Bijou." She was disappointed, and

half inclined to pout. But she vented her feelings in a letter to her beloved Florry, and appeared at dinner as sweet as usual.

During dinner a note came from the agent, accepting Dr. Staines's offer. He glozed the matter thus: he had persuaded the owner it was better to take a good tenant at a moderate loss, than to let the Bijou be uninhabited during the present rainy season. An assignment of the lease —which contained the usual covenants— would be prepared immediately, and Dr. Staines could have possession in forty-eight hours, by paying the premium.

Rosa was delighted, and as soon as dinner was over, and the waiters gone, she came and kissed Christopher. He smiled, and said, "Well, you are pleased; that is the principal thing. I have saved £200, and that is something. It will go towards furnishing."

"La, yes!" said Rosa, "I forgot. We shall have to get furniture now. How

nice!" It was a pleasure the man of forecast could have willingly dispensed with; but he smiled at her, and they discussed furniture, and Christopher, whose retentive memory had picked up a little of everything, said there were wholesale upholsterers in the City, who sold cheaper than the West-end houses, and he thought the best way was to measure the rooms in the Bijou, and go to the City with a clear idea of what they wanted; ask the prices of various necessary articles, and then make a list, and demand a discount of fifteen per cent. on the whole order, being so considerable, and paid for in cash.

Rosa acquiesced, and told Christopher he was the cleverest man in England.

About nine o'clock Mrs. Cole came in to condole with her friend, and heard the good news. When Rosa told her how they thought of furnishing, she said, "Oh, no, you must not do that; you will pay double for everything. That is the mistake Johnnie

and I made; and after that a friend of mine took me to the auction-rooms, and I saw everything sold—oh, such bargains; half, and less than half, their value. She has furnished her house almost entirely from sales, and she has the loveliest things in the world—such ducks of tables, and *jardinières*, and things; and beautiful rare china;—her house swarms with it—for an old song. A sale is the place. And then so amusing."

"Yes, but," said Christopher, "I should not like my wife to encounter a public room."

"Not alone, of course; but with me. La! Dr. Staines, they are too full of buying and selling, to trouble their heads about us."

"Oh, Christopher, do let me go with her. Am I always to be a child?"

Thus appealed to before a stranger, Staines replied warmly, "No, dearest, no: you cannot please me better than by beginning life in earnest. If you two ladies

together can face an auction-room, go by all means; only I must ask you not to buy china, or ormolu, or anything that will break or spoil, but only solid, good furniture."

"Won't you come with us?"

"No; or you might feel yourself in leading-strings. Remember the Bijou is a small house; choose your furniture to fit it, and then we shall save something by its being so small."

This was Wednesday. There was a weekly sale in Oxford Street on Friday; and the ladies made the appointment accordingly.

Next day, after breakfast, Christopher was silent and thoughtful awhile, and at last said to Rosa, "I'll show you I don't look on you as a child: I'll consult you in a delicate matter."

Rosa's eyes sparkled.

"It is about my Uncle Philip. He has been very cruel; he has wounded me deeply; he has wounded me through my

wife. I never thought he would refuse to come to our marriage."

"And did he? You never showed me his letter."

"You were not my wife then. I kept an affront from you: but now, you see, I keep nothing."

"Dear Christie!"

"I am so happy, I have got over that sting—almost: and the memory of many kind acts comes back to me: and—I don't know what to do. It seems ungrateful not to visit him: it seems almost mean to call."

"I'll tell you; take me to see him directly. He won't hate us for ever, if he sees us often. We may as well begin at once. Nobody hates me long."

Christopher was proud of his wife's courage and wisdom: he kissed her; begged her to put on the plainest dress she could, and they went together to call on Uncle Philip.

When they got to his house in Gloucester

Place, Portman Square, Rosa's heart began to quake, and she was right glad when the servant said "Not at home."

They left their cards and address; and she persuaded Christopher to take her to the sale-room to see the things.

A lot of brokers were there, like vultures, and one after another stepped forward and pestered them to employ him in the morning. Dr. Staines declined their services civilly, but firmly, and he and Rosa looked over a quantity of furniture, and settled what sort of things to buy.

Another broker came up, and whenever the couple stopped before an article, proceeded to praise it as something most extraordinary. Staines listened in cold satirical silence, and told his wife, in French, to do the same. Notwithstanding their marked disgust, the impudent, intrusive fellow stuck to them, and forced his venal criticism on them and made them uncomfortable, and shortened their tour of observation.

"I think I shall come with you to-morrow," said Christopher, "or I shall have these blackguards pestering you."

"Oh, Florry will send them to the right-about. She is as brave as a lion."

Next day Dr. Staines was sent for into the City at twelve to pay the money, and receive the lease of the Bijou, and this and the taking possession occupied him till four o'clock, when he came to his hotel.

Meantime, his wife and Mrs. Cole had gone to the auction-room.

It was a large room, with a good sprinkling of people, but not crowded except about the table. At the head of this table—full twenty feet long—was the auctioneer's pulpit, and the lots were brought in turn to the other end of the table for sight and sale.

"We must try and get a seat," said the enterprising Mrs. Cole, and pushed boldly in; the timid Rosa followed strictly in her wake, and so evaded the human waves her

leader clove. They were importuned at every step by brokers thrusting catalogues on them, with offers of their services, yet they soon got to the table. A gentleman resigned one chair, a broker another; and they were seated.

Mrs. Staines let down half her veil; but Mrs. Cole surveyed the company point-blank.

The broker, who had given up his seat, and now stood behind Rosa, offered her his catalogue. "No, thank you," said Rosa, "I have one;" and she produced it, and studied it, yet managed to look furtively at the company.

There were not above a dozen private persons visible from where Rosa sat: perhaps as many more in the whole room. They were easily distinguishable by their cleanly appearance; the dealers, male or female, were more or less rusty, greasy, dirty, aquiline. Not even the amateurs were brightly dressed: that fundamental

error was confined to Mesdames Cole and Staines. The experienced, however wealthy, do not hunt bargains in silk and satin.

The auctioneer called "Lot 7. Four saucepans, two trays, a kettle, a bootjack, and a towel-horse."

These were put up at two shillings, and speedily knocked down for five to a fat old woman in a greasy velvet jacket; blind industry had sowed bugles on it, not artfully, but agriculturally.

"The lady on the left!" said the auctioneer to his clerk. That meant, "Get the money."

The old lady plunged a huge paw into a huge pocket, and pulled out a huge handful of coin—copper, silver, and gold—and paid for the lot: and Rosa surveyed her dirty hands and nails with innocent dismay. "Oh, what a dreadful creature!" she whispered; "and what can she want with those old rubbishy things? I saw a hole in one from here." The broker overheard, and said,

"She is a dealer, ma'am, and the things were given away. She'll sell them for a guinea, easy."

"Didn't I tell you?" said Mrs. Cole.

Soon after this the superior lots came on, and six very neat bedroom chairs were sold to all appearance for fifteen shillings.

The next lot was identical; and Rosa hazarded a bid, "Sixteen shillings."

Instantly some dealer, one of the hooked-nosed that gathered round each lot as it came to the foot of the table, cried "Eighteen shillings."

"Nineteen," said Rosa.

"A guinea," said the dealer.

"Don't let it go," said the broker behind her. "Don't let it go, ma'am."

She coloured at the intrusion, and left off bidding directly, and addressed herself to Mrs. Cole. "Why should I give so much, when the last were sold for fifteen shillings?"

The real reason was that the first lot was

not bid for at all, except by the proprietor. However, the broker gave her a very different solution; he said, "The trade always run up a lady or a gentleman. Let me bid for you; they won't run me up; they know better."

Rosa did not reply, but looked at Mrs. Cole.

"Yes, dear," said that lady, "you had much better let him bid for you."

"Very well," said Rosa. "You can bid for this chest of drawers—Lot 25."

When Lot 25 came on, the broker bid in the silliest possible way, if his object had been to get a bargain; he began to bid early, and ostentatiously; the article was protected by somebody or other there present, who now of course saw his way clear: he ran it up audaciously, and it was purchased for Rosa at about the price it could have been bought for at a shop.

The next thing she wanted was a set of oak chairs.

They went up to twenty-eight pounds; then she said, "I shall give no more, sir."

"Better not lose them," said the agent; "they are a great bargain;" and bid another pound for her on his own responsibility.

They were still run up, and Rosa peremptorily refused to give any more. She lost them accordingly, by good luck. Her faithful broker looked blank; so did the proprietor.

But, as the sale proceeded, she being young, the competition, though most of it sham, being artful and exciting, and the traitor she employed constantly puffing every article, she was drawn in to wishing for things, and bidding by her feelings.

Then her traitor played a game that has been played a hundred times, and the perpetrators never once lynched, as they ought to be, on the spot; he signalled a confederate with a hooked nose; the Jew rascal bid against the Christian scoundrel, and so they

ran up the more enticing things to twice their value under the hammer.

Rosa got flushed, and her eye gleamed like a gambler's, and she bought away like wildfire. In which sport she caught sight of an old gentleman with little black eyes, that kept twinkling at her.

She complained of these eyes to Mrs. Cole. "Why does he twinkle so? I can see it is at me. I am doing something foolish—I know I am."

Mrs. Cole turned and fixed a haughty stare on the old gentleman. Would you believe it? instead of sinking through the floor, he sat his ground, and retorted with a cold, clear grin.

But now, whenever Rosa's agent bid for her, and the other man of straw against him, the black eyes twinkled, and Rosa's courage began to ooze away. At last she said, "That is enough for one day. I shall go. Who could bear those eyes?"

The broker took her address, so did the

auctioneer's clerk. The auctioneer asked her for no deposit; her beautiful, innocent, and high-bred face was enough for a man who was always reading faces, and interpreting them.

And so they retired.

But this charming sex is like that same auctioneer's hammer, it cannot go abruptly. It is always going—going—going—a long time before it is gone. I think it would perhaps loiter at the door of a gaol, with the order of release in its hand, after six years' confinement. Getting up to go quenches in it the desire to go. So these ladies having got up to go, turned and lingered, and hung fire so long, that at last another set of oak chairs came up. "Oh! I must see what these go for," said Rosa, at the door.

The bidding was mighty languid now Rosa's broker was not stimulating it; and the auctioneer was just knocking down twelve chairs—oak and leather—and two arm-chairs, for twenty pounds, when, cast-

ing his eyes around, he caught sight of Rosa looking at him rather excited. He looked inquiringly at her. She nodded slightly; he knocked them down to her at twenty guineas, and they were really a great bargain.

"Twenty-two," cried a dealer.

"Too late," said the auctioneer.

"I spoke with the hammer, sir."

"After the hammer, Isaacs."

"Shelp me God, we was together."

One or two more of his tribe confirmed this pious falsehood, and clamoured to have them put up again.

"Call the next lot," said the auctioneer, peremptorily. "Make up your mind a little quicker next time, Mr. Isaacs; you have been long enough at it to know the value of oak and moroccar."

Mrs. Staines and her friend now started for Morley's Hotel, but went round by Regent Street: whereby they got glued at Peter Robinson's window, and nine other

windows; and it was nearly five o'clock when they reached Morley's. As they came near the door of their sitting-room, Mrs. Staines heard somebody laughing and talking to her husband. The laugh, to her subtle ears, did not sound musical and genial, but keen, satirical, unpleasant: so it was with some timidity she opened the door; and there sat the old chap with the twinkling eyes. Both parties stared at each other a moment.

"Why, it is them," cried the old gentleman; "ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

Rosa coloured all over, and felt guilty somehow, and looked miserable.

"Rosa, dear," said Dr. Staines, "this is our Uncle Philip."

"Oh!" said Rosa, and turned red and pale by turns: for she had a great desire to propitiate Uncle Philip.

"You were in the auction-room, sir," said Mrs. Cole, severely.

"I was, madam. He! he!"

"Furnishing a house?"

"No, ma'am. I go to a dozen sales a week; but it is not to buy; I enjoy the humours. Did you ever hear of Robert Burton, ma'am?"

"No. Yes; a great traveller, isn't he? Discovered the Nile — or the Niger — or *something*."

This majestic vagueness staggered old Crusty at first, but he recovered his equilibrium, and said, "Why, yes, now I think of it, you are right; he has travelled farther than most of us; for about two centuries ago he visited that bourne whence no traveller returns. Well, when he was alive—he was a student of Christchurch—he used to go down to a certain bridge over the Isis, and enjoy the chaff of the bargemen. Now there are no bargemen left to speak of: the mantle of Bobby Burton's bargees has fallen on the Jews and demi-semi-Christians that buy and sell furniture at the weekly auctions: thither I repair to hear what little

coarse wit is left us: used to go to the House of Commons; but they are getting too civil by half for my money. Besides, characters come out in an auction. For instance, only this very day I saw two ladies enter, in gorgeous attire, like heifers decked for sacrifice, and reduce their spoliation to a certainty by employing a broker to bid. Now, what is a broker? A fellow who is to be paid a shilling in the pound for all articles purchased. What is his interest, then? To buy cheap? Clearly not. He is paid in proportion to the dearness of the article."

Rosa's face began to work piteously.

"Accordingly, what did the broker in question do? He winked to another broker, and these two bid against one another, over their victim's head, and ran everything she wanted up at least a hundred per cent. above the value. So open and transparent a swindle I have seldom seen, even in an auction-room. Ha! ha! ha! ha! ha!"

His mirth was interrupted by Rosa going to her husband, hiding her head on his shoulder, and meekly crying.

Christopher comforted her like a man. "Don't you cry, darling," said he; "how should a pure creature like you know the badness of the world all in a moment? If it is my wife you are laughing at, Uncle Philip, let me tell you this is the wrong place. I'd rather a thousand times have her as she is, than armed with the cunning and suspicions of a hardened old worldling like you."

"With all my heart," said Uncle Philip, who, to do him justice, could take blows as well as give them: "but why employ a broker? why pay a scoundrel five per cent. to make you pay a hundred per cent.? why pay a noisy fool a farthing to open his mouth for you when you have taken the trouble to be there yourself, and have got a mouth of your own to bid discreetly with? Wus ever such an absurdity?" He began to get angry.

"Do you want to quarrel with me, Uncle Philip?" said Christopher, firing up; "because sneering at my Rosa is the way, and the only way, and the sure way."

"Oh! no," said Rosa, interposing; "Uncle Philip was right. I am very foolish and inexperienced, but I am not so vain as to turn from good advice. I will never employ a broker again, sir."

Uncle Philip smiled, and looked pleased.

Mrs. Cole caused a diversion by taking leave, and Rosa followed her down-stairs. On her return she found Christopher telling his uncle all about the Bijou, and how he had taken it for £130 a year and £100 premium, and Uncle Philip staring fearfully.

At last he found his tongue. "The Bijou!" said he. "Why, that is a name they gave to a little den in Dear Street, Mayfair. You haven't ever been and taken *that!* Built over a mews."

Christopher groaned. "That is the place, I fear."

"Why, the owner is a friend of mine; an old patient. Stables stunk him out. Let it to a man; I forget his name. Stables stunk *him* out. He said, 'I shall go.' 'You can't,' said my friend; 'you have taken a lease.' 'Lease be d——d,' said the other; 'I never took *your* house; here's quite a large stench not specified in your description of the property: *it can't be the same place;*' flung the lease at his head, and cut like the wind to foreign parts less odoriferous. I'd have got you the hole for ninety; but you are like your wife, you must go to an agent. What, don't you know that an agent is a man acting for you with an interest opposed to yours? Employing an agent; it is like a Trojan seeking the aid of a Greek. You needn't cry, Mrs. Staines; your husband has been let in deeper than you have. Now you are young people beginning life: I'll give you a piece of advice. Employ others to do what you can't do, and it must be done;

but never to do anything you can do better for yourselves! Agent! the word is derived from a Latin word, 'agere,' to do; and agents act up to their etymology, for they invariably *do* the nincompoop that employs them, or deals with them, in any mortal way. I'd have got you that beastly little Bijou for £90 a year."

Uncle Philip went away crusty, leaving the young couple finely mortified and discouraged.

That did not last very long; Christopher noted the experience, and Uncle Phil's wisdom in his diary, and then took his wife on his knee, and comforted her, and said, "Never mind; experience is worth money, and it always has to be bought. Those who cheat us will die poorer than we shall, if we are honest and economical. I have observed that people are seldom ruined by the vices of others; these may hurt them, of course; but it is only their own faults and follies that can destroy them."

"Ah! Christie," said Rosa, "you are a man. Oh! the comfort of being married to *a man*. A man sees the best side. I do adore men. Dearest, I will waste no more of your money. I will go to no more sales."

Christopher saw she was deeply mortified, and he said, quietly, "On the contrary, you will go to the very next. Only take Uncle Philip's advice, employ no broker; and watch the prices things fetch when you are not bidding; and keep cool."

She caressed his ears with both her white hands, and thanked him for giving her another trial. So that trouble melted in the sunshine of conjugal love.

Notwithstanding the agent's solemn assurance, the Bijou was out of repair. Dr. Staines detected internal odours, as well as those that flowed in from the mews. He was not the man to let his wife perish by miasma; so he had the drains all up, and actually found brick drains, and a cesspool:

he stopped that up, and laid down new pipe drains, with a good fall, and properly trapped. The old drains were hidden, after the manner of builders. He had the whole course of his new drains marked upon all the floors they passed under, and had several stones and boards hinged, to facilitate examination at any period.

But all this, with the necessary cleaning, whitewashing, painting, and papering, ran away with money. Then came Rosa's purchases, which, to her amazement, amounted to £190, and not a carpet, curtain, or bed amongst the lot. Then there was the carriage home from the auction-room, an expense one avoids by buying at a shop, and the broker claimed his shilling in the pound. This, however, Staines refused. The man came and blustered. Rosa, who was there, trembled. Then, for the first time, she saw her husband's brow lower; he seemed transfigured, and looked terrible. "You scoundrel," said he, "you set another

villain like yourself to bid against you, and you betrayed the innocent lady that employed you. I could indict you and your confederate for a conspiracy: I take the goods out of respect for my wife's credit, but you shall gain nothing by swindling her. Be off, you heartless miscreant, or I'll——"

"I'll take the law, if you do."

"Take it, then; I'll give you something to howl for;" and he seized him with a grasp so tremendous that the fellow cried out in dismay, "Oh! don't hit me, sir; pray don't."

On this abject appeal, Staines tore the door open with his left hand, and spun the broker out into the passage with his right. Two movements of this angry Hercules, and the man was literally whirled out of sight with a rapidity and swiftness almost ludicrous; it was like a trick in a pantomime; a clatter on the stairs betrayed that he had gone down the first few steps in a

wholesale and irregular manner, though he had just managed to keep his feet.

As for Staines, he stood there still lowering like thunder, and his eyes like hot coals; but his wife threw her tender arms around him, and begged him consolingly not to mind.

She was trembling like an aspen.

"Dear me," said Christopher, with a ludicrous change to marked politeness and respect; "I forgot *you*, in my righteous indignation." Next he became uxorious. "Did they frighten her, a duck? Sit on my knee, darling, and pull my hair, for not being more considerate—there—there."

This was followed by the whole, absurd, soothing process as practised by manly husbands upon quivering and somewhat hysterical wives; and ended with a formal apology. "You must not think that I am passionate; on the contrary, I am always practising self-government. My maxim is, *Anumum rege qui nisi paret imperat;* and

that means make your temper your servant, or else it will be your master. But to ill-use my dear little wife, it is unnatural, it is monstrous, it makes my blood boil."

"Oh, dear! don't go into another. It is all over. I can't bear to see you in a passion; you are so terrible, so beautiful. Ah! they are fine things, courage and strength. There's nothing I admire so much."

"Why they are as. common as dirt. What I admire is modesty, timidity, sweetness; the sensitive cheek that pales or blushes at a word, the bosom that quivers, and clings to a fellow whenever anything goes wrong."

"Oh, that is what you admire, is it?" said Rosa, drily.

"Admire it?" said Christopher, not seeing the trap, "I adore it."

"Then, Christie, dear, you are a Simpleton; that is all. And we are made for one another."

The house was to be furnished and occupied as soon as possible; so Mrs. Staines and Mrs. Cole went to another sale-room. Mrs. Staines remembered all Uncle Philip had said, and went plainly dressed; but her friend declined to sacrifice her showy dress to her friend's interests. Rosa thought that a little unkind, but said nothing.

In this auction-room they easily got a place at the table: but did not find it heaven; for a number of second-hand carpets were in the sale, and these, brimful of dust, were all shown on the table, and the dirt choked and poisoned our fair friends. Brokers pestered them, until at last, Rosa, smarting under her late exposure, addressed the auctioneer quietly, in her silvery tones: "Sir, these gentlemen are annoying me by forcing their services on me. I do not intend to buy at all unless I can be allowed to bid for myself."

When Rosa, blushing and amazed at her

own boldness, uttered these words, she little foresaw their effect. She had touched a popular sore.

"You are quite right, madam," said a respectable tradesman opposite her. "What business have these dirty fellows, without a shilling in their pockets, to go and force themselves on a lady against her will?"

"It has been complained of in the papers again and again," said another.

"What, mayn't we live as well as you?" retorted a broker.

"Yes, but not to force yourself on a lady. Why she'd give you in charge of the police if you tried it on outside."

Then there was a downright clamour of discussion and chaff.

Presently up rises very slowly a countryman so colossal, that it seemed as if he would never have done getting up; and gives his experiences. He informed the company, in a broad Yorkshire dialect, that he did a bit in furniture, and at first start-

ing these brokers buzzed about him like flies, and pestered him. "Aah damned 'em pretty hard," said he, "but they didn't heed any. So then ah spoke 'em civil, and ah said, 'Well, lads, I dinna come fra Yorkshire to sit like a dummy and let you buy wi' my brass: the first that pesters me again ah'll just fell him on t' plaace, like a caulf, and ah'm not very sure he'll get up again in a hurry.' So they dropped me like a hot potatoe; never pestered me again. But if they won't give over pestering you, mistress, ah'll come round and just stand behind your chair, and bring nieve with me," showing a fist like a leg of mutton.

"No, no," said the auctioneer, "that will not do. I will have no disturbance here. Call the policeman."

While the clerk went to the door for the bobby, a gentleman reminded the auctioneer that the journals had repeatedly drawn attention to the nuisance.

"Fault of the public, not mine, sir. Policeman, stand behind that lady's chair, and if anybody annoys her put him quietly into the street."

"This auction-room will be to let soon," said a voice at the end of the table.

"This auction-room," said the auctioneer, master of the gay or grave at a moment's notice, "is supported by the public and the trade; it is not supported by paupers."

A Jew upholsterer put in his word. "I do my own business: but I like to let a poor man live."

"Jonathan," said the auctioneer to one of his servants, "after this sale you may put up the shutters: we have gone and offended Mr. Jacobs. He keeps a shop in Blind Alley, Whitechapel. Now then, Lot 69."

Rosa bid timidly for one or two lots, and bought them cheap.

The auctioneer kept looking her way, and she had only to nod.

The obnoxious broker got opposite her, and ran her up a little out of spite; but as he had only got half-a-crown about him, and no means of doubling it, he dared not go far.

On the other side of the table was a figure to which Rosa's eyes often turned with interest: a fair young boy about twelve years old; he had golden hair, and was in deep mourning. His appearance interested Rosa, and she wondered how he came there, and why: he looked like a lamb wedged in among wolves, a flower among weeds. As the lots proceeded the boy seemed to get uneasy; and at last, when Lot 73 was put up, anybody could see in his poor little face that he was there to bid for it.

"Lot 73, an arm-chair covered in morocco. An excellent and useful article. Should not be at all surprised if it was made by Gillow."

"Gillow would though," said Jacobs, who owed him a turn.

Chorus of dealers. "Haw! haw!"

The auctioneer. "I like to hear some people run a lot down; shows they are going to bid for it in earnest. Well, name your own price. Five pounds to begin?"

Now if nobody had spoken the auctioneer would have gone on, "Well, four pounds then, three, two, whatever you like," and at last obtained a *boná fide* offer of thirty shillings; but the moment he said "Five pounds to begin," the boy in black lifted up his childish treble, and bid thus, "five pound ten"—"six pounds"—"six pound ten"—"seven pounds"—"seven pound ten"—"eight pounds"—"eight pound ten"—"nine pounds"—"nine pound ten"—"ten pounds!" without interruption, and indeed almost in a breath.

There was a momentary pause of amazement, and then an outburst of chaff.

"Nice little boy!"

"Didn't he say his lesson well?"

"Favour us with your card, sir. You are a gent as knows how to buy."

"What did he stop for! If it's worth ten it is worth a hundred."

"Bless the child!" said a female dealer, kindly, "what made you go on like that? Why there was no one bid against you! you'd have got it for two pounds—a rickety old thing."

Young master began to whimper. "Why, the gentleman said, 'Five pounds to *begin.*' It was the chair poor grandpapa always sat in, and all the things are sold, and mamma said it would break her heart to lose it. She was too ill to come, so she sent me. She told me I was not to let it be sold away from us for less than ten pounds, or she sh—should be m—m—miserable," and the poor little fellow began to cry. Rosa followed suit promptly but unobtrusively.

"Sentiment always costs money," said Mr. Jacobs, gravely.

"How do you know?" asked Mr. Cohen.

"Have *you* got any on hand? I never seen none at your shop."

Some tempting things now came up, and Mrs. Staines bid freely; but all of a sudden she looked down the table, and there was Uncle Philip twinkling as before. "Oh dear! what am I doing now!" thought she. "I have got no broker."

She bid on, but in fear and trembling because of those twinkling eyes. At last she mustered courage, wrote on a leaf of her pocket-book, and passed it down to him. "It would be only kind to warn me. What am I doing wrong?"

He sent her back a line directly: "Auctioneer running you up himself. Follow his eye when he bids; you will see there is no *bonâ fide* bidder at your prices."

Rosa did so, and found that it was true.

She nodded to Uncle Philip; and, with her expressive face, asked him what she should do.

The old boy must have his joke. So he

wrote back—"Tell him, as you see he has a fancy for certain articles, you would not be so discourteous as to bid against him."

The next article but one was a drawing-room suite Rosa wanted; but the auctioneer bid against her; so, at eighteen pounds, she stopped.

"It is against you, madam," said the auctioneer.

"Yes, sir," said Rosa; "but as you are the only bidder, and you have been so kind to me, I would not think of opposing you."

The words were scarcely out of her mouth when they were greeted with a roar of Homeric laughter that literally shook the room, and this time not at the expense of the innocent speaker.

"That's into your mutton, governor."

"Sharp's the word this time."

"I say, governor, don't you want a broker to bid for ye?"

"Wink at me next time, sir; I'll do the office for you."

"No greenhorns left now."

"That lady won't give a ten-pund note for her grandfather's arm-chair."

"Oh yes, she will, if it's stuffed with bank-notes."

"Put the next lot up with the owner's name and the reserve price. Open business."

"And sing a psalm at starting."

"A little less noise in Judæa, if you please," said the auctioneer, who had now recovered from the blow. "Lot 97."

This was a very pretty marqueterie cabinet; it stood against the wall, and Rosa had set her heart upon it. Nobody would bid. She had muzzled the auctioneer effectually.

"Your own price."

"Two pounds," said Rosa.

A dealer offered guineas; and it advanced slowly to four pounds and half-a-crown, at which it was about to be knocked down to Rosa, when suddenly a new bidder arose in the broker Rosa had rejected: they bid

slowly and sturdily against each other, until a line was given to Rosa from Uncle Philip.

"This time it is your own friend, the snipe-nosed woman. She telegraphed a broker."

Rosa read, and crushed the note. "Six guineas," said she.

"Six-ten."

"Seven."

"Seven-ten."

"Eight."

"Eight-ten."

"Ten guineas," said Rosa; and then, with feminine cunning, stealing a sudden glance, caught her friend leaning back and signalling the broker not to give in.

"Eleven pounds."

"Twelve."

"Thirteen."

"Fourteen."

"Sixteen."

"Eighteen."

"Twenty."

"Twenty guineas."

"It is yours, my faithful friend," said Rosa, turning suddenly round to Mrs. Cole, with a magnificent glance no one would have thought her capable of.

Then she rose and stalked away.

Dumb-foundered for the moment, Mrs. Cole followed her, and stopped her at the door.

"Why, Rosie dear, it is the only thing I have bid for. There I've sat by your side like a mouse."

Rosa turned gravely towards her. "You know it is not that. You had only to tell me you wanted it. I would never have been so mean as to bid against you."

"Mean, indeed!" said Florence, tossing her head.

"Yes, mean; to draw back and hide behind the friend you were with, and employ the very rogue she had turned off. But it is my own fault. Cecilia warned me against

you. She always said you were a treacherous girl."

"And I say you are an impudent little minx. Only just married, and going about like two vagabonds, and talk to me like that!"

"We are not going about like two vagabonds. We have taken a house in Mayfair."

"Say a stable."

"It was by your advice, you false-hearted creature."

"You are a fool."

"You are worse; you are a traitress."

"Then don't you have anything to do with me."

"Heaven forbid I should. You treacherous thing."

"You insolent—insolent—I hate you."

"And I despise you."

"I always hated you at bottom."

"That's why you pretended to love me, you wretch."

"Well, I pretend no more. I am your enemy for life."

"Thank you. You have told the truth for once in your life."

"I have. And he shall never call in your husband; so you may leave Mayfair as soon as you like."

"Not to please you, madam. We can get on without traitors."

And so they parted, with eyes that gleamed like tigers.

Rosa drove home in great agitation, and tried to tell Christopher, but choked, and became hysterical. The husband physician coaxed and scolded her out of that; and presently in came Uncle Philip, full of the humours of the auction-room. He told about the little boy with a delight that disgusted Mrs. Staines; and then was particularly merry on female friendships. "Fancy a man going to a sale with his friend, and bidding against him on the sly."

"She is no friend of mine. We are enemies for life."

"And you were to be friends till death," said Staines, with a sigh.

Philip inquired who she was.

"Mrs. John Cole."

"Not of Curzon Street?"

"Yes."

"And you have quarrelled with her?"

"Yes."

"Well, but her husband is a general practitioner."

"She is a traitress."

"But her husband could put a good deal of money in Christopher's way."

"I can't help it. She is a traitress."

"And you have quarrelled with her about an old wardrobe."

"No, for her disloyalty, and her base, good-for-nothingness. Oh! oh! oh!"

Uncle Philip got up, looking sour. "Good afternoon, Mrs. Christopher," said he, very dryly.

Christopher accompanied him to the foot of the stairs.

"Well, Christopher," said he, "matrimony is a blunder at the best; and you have not done the thing by halves. You have married a simpleton. She will be your ruin."

"Uncle Philip, since you only come here to insult us, I hope in future you will stay at home."

"Oh! with pleasure, sir. Good-bye."

CHAPTER VII.

Christopher Staines came back, looking pained and disturbed. "There," said he, "I feared it would come to this. I have quarrelled with Uncle Philip."

"Oh! how could you?"

"He affronted me."

"What about?"

"Never you mind. Don't let us say anything more about it, darling. It is a pity, a sad pity—he was a good friend of mine once."

He paused, entered what had passed in his diary, and then sat down, with a gentle expression of sadness on his manly features. Rosa hung about him, soft and pitying, till it cleared away, at all events for the time.

Next day they went together to clear the goods Rosa had purchased. Whilst the list was being made out in the office, in came the fair-haired boy, with a ten-pound note in his very hand. Rosa caught sight of it, and turned to the auctioneer, with a sweet, pitying face: "Oh! sir, surely you will not take all that money from him, poor child, for a rickety old chair."

The auctioneer stared with amazement at her simplicity, and said, "What would the vendors say to me?"

She looked distressed, and said, "Well, then, really we ought to raise a subscription, poor thing!"

"Why, ma'am," said the auctioneer, "he isn't hurt: the article belonged to his mother and her sister; the brother-in-law isn't on good terms; so he demanded a public sale. She will get back four pun ten out of it." Here the clerk put in his word. "And there's five pounds paid, I forgot to tell you."

"Oh! left a deposit, did he?"

"No, sir. But the laughing Hyena gave you five pounds at the end of the sale."

"The laughing Hyena, Mr. Jones?"

"Oh! beg pardon: that is what we call him in the room. He has got such a curious laugh."

"Oh! I know the gent. He is a retired doctor. I wish he'd laugh less, and buy more: and *he* gave you five pounds towards the young gentleman's arm-chair! Well, I should as soon have expected blood from a flint. You have got five pounds to pay, sir: so now the chair will cost your mamma ten shillings. Give him the order and the change, Mr. Jones."

Christopher and Rosa talked this over in the room whilst the men were looking out their purchases. "Come," said Rosa; "now I forgive him sneering at me; his heart is not really hard, you see." Staines, on the contrary, was very angry. "What!" he cried, "pity a boy who made one bad bar-

gain, that, after all, was not a very bad bargain; and he had no kindness, nor even common humanity, for my beautiful Rosa, inexperienced as a child, and buying for her husband, like a good, affectionate, honest creature, amongst a lot of sharpers and hard-hearted cynics—like himself."

"It *was* cruel of him," said Rosa, altering her mind in a moment, and half inclined to cry.

This made Christopher furious. "The ill-natured, crotchety, old—the fact is he is a misognyist."

"Oh, the wretch!" said Rosa, warmly. "And what is that?"

"A woman-hater."

"Oh! is that all? Why, so do I—after that Florence Cole. Women are mean, heartless things. Give me men; they are loyal and true."

"All of them?" inquired Christopher, a little satirically. "Read the papers."

"Every soul of them," said Mrs. Staines,

passing loftily over the proposed test. "That is, all the ones *I* care about; and that is my own, own one."

Disagreeable creatures to have about one —these simpletons!

Mrs. Staines took Christopher to shops, to buy the remaining requisites: and in three days more the house was furnished, two female servants engaged, and the couple took their luggage over to the Bijou.

Rosa was excited and happy at the novelty of possession, and authority, and that close sense of house proprietorship which belongs to woman. By dinner-time she could have told you how many shelves there were in every cupboard, and knew the Bijou by heart in a way that Christopher never knew it. All this ended, as running about and excitement generally does, with my lady being exhausted, and lax with fatigue. So then he made her lie down on a little couch, while he went through his accounts.

When he had examined all the bills carefully he looked very grave, and said, "Who would believe this? We began with £3,000. It was to last us several years—till I got a good practice. Rosa, there is only £1,440 left."

"Oh, impossible!" said Rosa. "Oh, dear! why did I ever enter a sale-room?"

"No, no, my darling; you were bitten once or twice, but you made some good bargains too. Remember there was £400 set apart for my life policy."

"What a waste of money!"

"Your father did not think so. Then the lease; the premium; repairs of the drains that would have poisoned my Rosa; turning the coach-house into a dispensary; painting, papering, and furnishing; china, and linen, and everything to buy. We must look at this seriously. Only £1,440 left. A slow profession. No friends. I have quarrelled with Uncle Philip: you with Mrs. Cole; and her husband would have launched me."

"And it was to please her we settled here. Oh, I could kill her: nasty cat!"

"Never mind; it is not a case for despondency, but it is for prudence. All we have to do is to look the thing in the face, and be very economical in everything. I had better give you an allowance for housekeeping; and I earnestly beg you to buy things yourself whilst you are a poor man's wife, and pay ready money for everything. My mother was a great manager, and she always said, 'There is but one way: be your own market-woman, and pay on the spot; never let the tradesmen get you on their books, or, what with false weight, double charges, and the things your servants order that never enter the house, you lose more than a hundred a year by cheating.'"

Rosa yielded a languid assent to this part of his discourse, and it hardly seemed to enter her mind; but she raised no objection; and in due course he made her a special allowance for housekeeping.

It soon transpired that medical advice was to be had, gratis, at the Bijou, from eight till ten: and there was generally a good attendance. But a week passed, and not one patient came of the class this couple must live by. Christopher set this down to what people call "the Transition period:" his Kent patients had lost him; his London patients not found him. He wrote to all his patients in the country, and many of his pupils at the university, to let them know where he was settled: and then he waited.

Not a creature came.

Rosa bore this very well for a time, so long as the house was a novelty; but, when that excitement was worn out, she began to be very dull, and used to come and entice him out to walk with her: he would look wistfully at her, but object, that, if he left the house, he should be sure to lose a patient.

"Oh! they won't come any more for our staying in—tiresome things!" said Rosa.

But Christopher would kiss her, and remain firm. "My love," said he, "you do not realize how hard a fight there is before us. How should you? You are very young. No, for your sake, I must not throw a chance away. Write to your female friends: that will while away an hour or two."

"What, after that Florence Cole?"

"Write to those who have not made such violent professions."

"So I will, dear. Especially to those that are married and come to London. Oh, and I'll write to that cold-blooded thing, Lady Cicely Treherne. Why do you shake your head?"

"Did I? I was not aware. Well, dear; if ladies of rank were to come here, I fear they might make you discontented with your lot."

"All the women on earth could not do that. However, the chances are she will not come near me: she left the school quite a big girl, an immense girl, when I was only

twelve. She used to smile at my capriccios; and once she kissed me—actually. She was an awful sawny, though, and so affected: I think I will write to her."

These letters brought just one lady, a Mrs. Turner, who talked to Rosa very glibly about herself, and amused Rosa twice: at the third visit, Rosa tried to change the conversation. Mrs. Turner instantly got up, and went away. She could not bear the sound of the human voice, unless it was talking about her and her affairs.

And now Staines began to feel downright uneasy. Income was going steadily out: not a shilling coming in. The lame, the blind, and the sick, frequented his dispensary, and got his skill out of him gratis, and sometimes a little physic, a little wine, and other things that cost him money: but, of the patients that pay, not one came to his front door.

He walked round and round his little yard, like a hyena in its cage, waiting, wait-

ing, waiting: and oh! how he envied the lot of those, who can hunt for work, instead of having to stay at home, and wait for others to come, whose will they cannot influence. His heart began to sicken with hope deferred, and dim forebodings of the future; and he saw, with grief, that his wife was getting duller and duller, and that her days dragged more heavily far than his own; for he could study.

At last his knocker began to show signs of life: his visitors were physicians. His lectures on "Diagnosis," were well known to them; and one after another found him out. They were polite, kind, even friendly; but here it ended: these gentlemen, of course, did not resign their patients to him; and the inferior class of practitioners avoided his door like a pestilence.

Mrs. Staines, who had always lived for amusement, could strike out no fixed occupation; her time hung like lead; the house was small; and, in small houses, the faults

of servants run against the mistress, and she can't help seeing them, and all the worse for her. It is easier to keep things clean in the country, and Rosa had a high standard, which her two servants could never quite attain. This annoyed her, and she began to scold a little. They answered civilly, but, in other respects, remained imperfect beings; they laid out every shilling they earned in finery; and this, I am ashamed to say, irritated Mrs. Staines, who was wearing out her wedding garments, and had no excuse for buying, and Staines had begged her to be economical. The more they dressed, the more she scolded; they began to answer. She gave the cook warning; the other, though not on good terms with the cook, had a gush of *esprit du corps* directly, and gave Mrs. Staines warning.

Mrs. Staines told her husband all this: he took her part, though without openly interfering; and they had two new servants, not so good as the last.

This worried Rosa sadly; but it was a fleabite to the deeper nature, and more forecasting mind of her husband, still doomed to pace that miserable yard, like a hyena, chafing, seeking, longing for the patient that never came.

Rosa used to look out of his dressing-room window, and see him pace the yard. At first, tears of pity stood in her eyes. By-and-by she got angry with the world; and at last, strange to say, a little irritated with him. It is hard for a weak woman to keep up all her respect for the man that fails.

One day, after watching him a long time unseen, she got excited, put on her shawl and bonnet, and ran down to him: she took him by the arm; "If you love me, come out of this prison, and walk with me; we are too miserable. I shall be your first patient if this goes on much longer." He looked at her, saw she was very excited, and had better be humoured; so he kissed her, and just said, with a melancholy smile,

"How poor are they that have not patience!" Then he put on his hat, and walked in the Park, and Kensington Gardens, with her. The season was just beginning. There were carriages enough, and gay Amazons enough, to make poor Rosa sigh more than once.

Christopher heard the sigh; and pressed her arm, and said, "Courage, love, I hope to see you among them yet."

"The sooner the better," said she, a little hardly.

"And, meantime, which of them all is as beautiful as you?"

"All I know is, they are more attractive. Who looks at me? walking tamely by."

Christopher said nothing: but these words seemed to imply a thirst for admiration, and made him a little uneasy.

By-and-by the walk put the swift-changing Rosa in spirits, and she began to chat gaily, and hung prattling and beaming on her husband's arm, when they entered Curzon Street. Here, however, occurred an inci-

dent, trifling in itself, but unpleasant. Dr. Staines saw one of his best Kentish patients get feebly out of his carriage, and call on Dr. Barr. He started, and stopped. Rosa asked what was the matter. He told her. She said, "We *are* unfortunate."

Staines said nothing; he only quickened his pace; but he was greatly disturbed. She expected him to complain that she had dragged him out, and lost him that first chance. But he said nothing. When they got home, he asked the servant had anybody called.

"No, sir."

"Surely you are mistaken, Jane. A gentleman in a carriage!"

"Not a creature have been since you went out, sir."

"Well, then, dearest," said he, sweetly, "we have nothing to reproach ourselves with." Then he knit his brow gloomily. "It is worse than I thought. It seems even one's country patients go to another doctor

when they visit London. It is hard. It is hard."

Rosa leaned her head on his shoulder, and curled round him, as one she would shield against the world's injustice; but she said nothing; she was a little frightened at his eye that lowered, and his noble frame that trembled a little, with ire suppressed.

Two days after this, a brougham drove up to the door, and a tallish, fattish, pasty-faced man got out, and inquired for Dr. Staines.

He was shown into the dining-room, and told Jane he had come to consult the doctor.

Rosa had peeped over the stairs, all curiosity; she glided noiselessly down, and with love's swift foot got into the yard before Jane. "He is come! he is come! Kiss me."

Dr. Staines kissed her first, and then asked who was come.

"Oh, nobody of any consequence. *Only* the first patient. Kiss me again."

Dr. Staines kissed her again, and then was for going to the first patient.

"No," said she; "not yet. I met a doctor's wife at Dr. Mayne's, and she told me things. You must always keep them waiting; or else they think nothing of you. Such a funny woman! 'Treat 'em like dogs, my dear,' she said. But I told her they wouldn't come to be treated like dogs or any other animal."

"You had better have kept that to yourself, I think."

"Oh! if you are going to be disagreeable, good-bye. You can go to your patient, sir. Christie, dear, if he is very—very ill—and I'm sure I hope he is—oh, how wicked I am; may I have a new bonnet?"

"If you really want one."

On the patient's card was "Mr. Pettigrew, 47, Manchester Square."

As soon as Staines entered the room, the first patient told him who, and what, he was, a retired civilian from India; but he

had got a son there still, a very rising man; wanted to be a parson; but he would not stand that; bad profession; don't rise by merit; very hard to rise at all;—no, India was the place. "As for me, I made my fortune there in ten years. Obliged to leave it now—invalid this many years; no *tone*. Tried two or three doctors in this neighbourhood; heard there was a new one, had written a book on something. Thought I would try *him*."

To stop him, Staines requested to feel his pulse, and examine his tongue and eye.

"You are suffering from indigestion," said he. "I will write you a prescription; but, if you want to get well, you must simplify your diet very much."

While he was writing the prescription, off went this patient's tongue, and ran through the topics of the day, and into his family history again.

Staines listened politely. He could afford it, having only this one.

At last, the first patient, having delivered an 8vo. vol. of nothing, rose to go; but it seems that speaking an "infinite deal of nothing" exhausts the body, though it does not affect the mind; for the first patient sank down in his chair again. "I have excited myself too much—feel rather faint."

Staines saw no signs of coming syncope; he rang the bell quietly, and ordered a decanter of sherry to be brought; the first patient filled himself a glass; then another; and went off, revived, to chatter elsewhere. But, at the door, he said, "I had always a running account with Dr. Mivar. I suppose you don't object to that system. Double fee the first visit, single afterwards."

Dr. Staines bowed, a little stiffly; he would have preferred the money. However, he looked at the Blue Book, and found his visitor lived at 47, Manchester Square; so that removed his anxiety.

The first patient called every other day, chattered nineteen to the dozen, was ex-

hausted, drank two glasses of sherry, and drove away.

Soon after this a second patient called. This one was a deputy patient—Collett, a retired butler—kept a lodging-house, and waited at parties; he lived close by, but had a married daughter in Chelsea. Would the Doctor visit her, and *he* would be responsible?

Staines paid the woman a visit or two, and treated her so effectually, that soon her visits were paid to him. She was cured, and Staines, who by this time wanted to see money, sent to Collett.

Collett did not answer.

Staines wrote warmly.

Collett dead silent.

Staines employed a solicitor.

Collett said he had recommended the patient, that was all. He had never said he would pay her debts. That was her husband's business.

Now her husband was the mate of a ship;

would not be in England for eighteen months.

The woman, visited by lawyer's clerk, cried bitterly, and said she and her children had scarcely enough to eat.

Lawyer advised Staines to abandon the case, and pay him two pounds fifteen shillings, expenses. He did so.

"This is damnable," said he. "I must get it out of Pettigrew; by-the-bye, he has not been here this two days."

He waited another day for Pettigrew, and then wrote to him. No answer. Called. Pettigrew gone abroad. House in Manchester Square to let.

Staines went to the house-agent with his tale. Agent was impenetrable at first; but at last, won by the Doctor's manner and his unhappiness, referred him to Pettigrew's solicitor; the solicitor was a respectable man, and said he would forward the claim to Pettigrew in Paris.

But, by this time, Pettigrew was chattering

and guzzling in Berlin; and thence he got to St. Petersburg. In that stronghold of gluttony he gourmandized more than ever, and, being unable to talk it off his stomach, as in other cities, had apoplexy, and died.

But, long before this, Staines saw his money was as irrecoverable as his sherry; and he said to Rosa, "I wonder whether I shall ever live to curse the human race?"

"Heaven forbid!" said Rosa. "Oh, they use you cruelly, my poor, poor Christie!"

Thus for months the young Doctor's patients bled him, and that was all.

And Rosa got more and more moped at being in the house so much, and pestered Christopher to take her out, and he declined; and, being a man hard to beat, took to writing on medical subjects, in hopes of getting some money from the various medical and scientific publications; but he found it as hard to get the wedge in there as to get patients.

At last Rosa's remonstrances began to rise into something that sounded like reproaches. One Sunday she came to him in her bonnet, and interrupted his studies, to say he might as well lay down the pen and talk. Nobody would publish anything he wrote.

Christopher frowned, but contained himself, and laid down the pen.

"I might as well not be married at all as be a doctor's wife. You are never seen out with me, not even to church. Do behave like a Christian, and come to church with me, now."

Dr. Staines shook his head.

"Why, I wouldn't miss church for all the world. Any excitement is better than always moping. Come over the water with me. The time Jane and I went, the clergyman read a paper that Mr. Brown had fallen down in a fit. There was such a rush directly, and I'm sure fifty ladies went out—fancy, all Mrs. Browns! Wasn't that fun?"

"Fun? I don't see it. Well, Rosa, your mind is, evidently, better adapted to diversion than mine is. Go you to church, love, and I'll continue my studies."

"Then all I can say is, I wish I was back in my father's house. Husband! friend! companion!—I have none."

Then she burst out crying violently; and, being shocked at what she had said, and at the agony it had brought into her husband's face, she went off into hysterics; and, as his heart would not let him bellow at her, or empty a bucket on her as he would on another patient, she had a good long bout of them: and got her way; for she broke up his studies for that day, at all events.

Even after the hysterics were got under, she continued to moan and sigh very prettily, with her lovely, languid head pillowed on her husband's arm; in a word, though the hysterics were real, yet this innocent young person had the presence of mind to post-

pone entire convalescence, and lay herself out to be petted all day. But fate willed it otherwise; while she was sighing and moaning, came to the door a scurrying of feet; and then a sharp, persistent ringing that meant something. The moaner cocked eye and ear, and said, in her every-day voice, which, coming so suddenly, sounded very droll, "What is that, I wonder?"

Jane hurried to the street-door, and Rosa recovered by magic; and, preferring gossip to hysterics, in an almost gleeful whisper ordered Christopher to open the door of the study. The Bijou was so small that the following dialogue rang in their ears:

A boy in buttons gasped out, "Oh, if you please, will you ast the doctor to come round directly; there's a haccident."

"La, bless me!" said Jane; and never budged.

"Yes, miss. It's our missus's little girl fallen right off an i chair, and cut her head dreadful, and smothered in blood."

"La, to be sure!" And she waited steadily for more.

"Ay, and missus she fainted right off; and I've been to the regler doctor, which he's out; and Sarah, the housemaid, said I had better come here; you was only just set up, she said; you wouldn't have so much to do, says she."

"That is all *she* knows," said Jane. "Why, our master—they pulls him in pieces which is to have him fust."

"What an awful liar! Oh, you good girl!" whispered Dr. Staines and Rosa in one breath.

"Ah, well," said Buttons; "any way, Sarah says she knows you are clever, 'cos her little girl as lives with her mother, and calls Sarah aunt, has bin to your 'spensary with ringworm, and you cured her right off."

"Ay, and a good many more," said Jane, loftily. She was a housemaid of imagination; and, while Staines was putting some

lint and an instrument case into his pocket, she proceeded to relate a number of miraculous cures. Doctor Staines interrupted them by suddenly emerging, and inviting Buttons to take him to the house.

Mrs. Staines was so pleased with Jane for cracking up the Doctor, that she gave her five shillings; and after that used to talk to her a great deal more than to the cook, which judicious conduct presently set all three by the ears.

Buttons took the Doctor to a fine house in the same street, and told him his mistress's name on the way—Mrs. Lucas. He was taken up to the nursery, and found Mrs. Lucas seated, crying and lamenting, and a woman holding a little girl of about seven, whose brow had been cut open by the fender, on which she had fallen from a chair; it looked very ugly, and was even now bleeding.

Dr. Staines lost no time; he examined the wound keenly, and then said kindly to

Mrs. Lucas, "I am happy to tell you it is not serious." He then asked for a large basin and some tepid water, and bathed it so softly and soothingly that the child soon became composed; and the mother discovered the artist at once. He compressed the wound, and explained to Mrs. Lucas that the principal thing really was to avoid an ugly scar. "There is no danger," said he. He then bound the wound neatly up, and had the girl put to bed. "You will not wake her at any particular hour, nurse. Let her sleep. Have a little strong beef-tea ready, and give it her at any hour, night or day, she asks for it. But do not force it on her, or you will do her more harm than good. She had better sleep before she eats."

Mrs. Lucas begged him to come every morning; and, as he was going, she shook hands with him, and the soft palm deposited a hard substance wrapped in paper. He took it with professional gravity, and seem-

ing unconsciousness; but, once outside the house, went home on wings. He ran up to the drawing-room, and found his wife seated, and playing at reading. He threw himself on his knees, and the fee into her lap; and, while she unfolded the paper with an ejaculation of pleasure, he said, "Darling, the first real patient—the first real fee. It is yours to buy the new bonnet."

"Oh, I'm so glad," said she, with her eyes glistening. "But I'm afraid one can't get a bonnet fit to wear—for a guinea."

Dr. Staines visited his little patient every day, and received his guinea. Mrs. Lucas also called him in for her own little ailments, and they were the best possible kind of ailments: for, being imaginary, there was no limit to them.

Then did Mrs. Staines turn jealous of her husband. "They never ask me," said she; "and I am moped to death."

"It is hard," said Christopher, sadly. "But have a little patience. Society will

come to you long before practice comes to me."

About two o'clock one afternoon a carriage and pair drove up, and a gorgeous footman delivered a card, "Lady Cicely Treherne."

Of course Mrs. Staines was at home, and only withheld by propriety from bounding into the passage to meet her schoolfellow. However, she composed herself in the drawing-room, and presently the door was opened, and a very tall young woman, richly, but not gaily dressed, drifted into the room, and stood there a statue of composure.

Rosa had risen to fly to her; but the reverence a girl of eighteen strikes into a child of twelve hung about her still, and she came timidly forward, blushing and sparkling, a curious contrast in colour and mind to her visitor; for Lady Cicely was Languor in person—her hair whitey-brown, her face a fine oval, but almost colourless; her eyes a pale grey, her neck and hands incomparably white and beautiful—a lym-

phatic young lady, a live antidote to emotion. However, Rosa's beauty, timidity, and undisguised affectionateness were something so different from what she was used to in the world of fashion, that she actually smiled, and held out both her hands a little way. Rosa seized them, and pressed them; they let her, and remained passive and limp.

"Oh, Lady Cicely," said Rosa, "how kind of you to come."

"How kind of you to send to me," was the polite, but perfectly cool, reply. "But how you are gwown, and—may I say impwoved?—You la petite Lusignan! It is incwedible," lisped her ladyship, very calmly.

"I was only a child," said Rosa. "You were always so beautiful and tall, and kind to a little monkey like me. Oh, pray sit down, Lady Cicely, and talk of old times."

She drew her gently to the sofa, and they sat down hand in hand; but Lady Cicely's high-bred reserve made her a very poor

gossip about anything that touched herself and her family; so Rosa, though no egotist, was drawn into talking about herself more than she would have done had she deliberately planned the conversation. But here was an old schoolfellow, and a singularly polite listener, and so out came her love, her genuine happiness, her particular griefs, and especially the crowning grievance, no society, moped to death, &c.

Lady Cicely could hardly understand the sentiment in a woman who so evidently loved her husband. "Society!" said she, after due reflection, "why, it is a boa." (And here I may as well explain that Lady Cicely spoke certain words falsely, and others affectedly; and, as for the letter *r*, she could say it if she made a hearty effort, but was generally too lazy to throw her leg over it.) "Society! I'm dwenched to death with it. If I could only catch fiah like other women, and love somebody, I would much rather have a *tête-à-tête* with him than go teawing

about all day and all night, from one unintwisting cwowd to another. To be sure," said she, puzzling the matter out, "you are a beauty, and would be more looked at."

"The idea! and—oh no! no! it is not that. But even in the country we had always some society."

"Well, dyar, believe me, with your appeawance, you can have as much society as you please; but it will boa you to death, as it does me, and then you will long to be left quiet with a sensible man who loves you."

Said Rosa, "When shall I have another *tête-à-tête* with *you*, I wonder? Oh, it has been such a comfort to me. Bless you for coming. There—I wrote to Cecilia, and Emily, and Mrs. Bosanquet that is now, and all my sworn friends, and to think of you being the one to come—you that never kissed me but once, and an earl's daughter into the bargain."

"Ha! ha! ha!"—Lady Cicely actually laughed for once in a way, and did not feel

the effort. "As for kissing," said she, "if I fall shawt, fawgive me. I was nevaa vewy demonstwative."

"No; and I have had a lesson. That Florence Cole—Florence Whiting that was, you know—was always kissing me, and she has turned out a traitor. I'll tell you all about her." And she did.

Lady Cicely thought Mrs. Staines a little too unreserved in her conversation; but was so charmed with her sweetness and freshness that she kept up the acquaintance, and called on her twice a-week during the season. At first she wondered that her visits were not returned; but Rosa let out that she was ashamed to call on foot in Grosvenor Square.

Lady Cicely shrugged her beautiful shoulders a little at that; but she continued to do the visiting, and to enjoy the simple, innocent rapture with which she was received.

This lady's pronunciation of many words

was false or affected. She said "good murning" for "good morning," and turned other vowels to diphthongs, and played two or three pranks with her "r"s. But we cannot be all imperfection: with her pronunciation her folly came to a full stop. I really believe she lisped less nonsense and bad taste in a year than some of us articulate in a day. To be sure, folly is generally uttered in a hurry, and she was too deplorably lazy to speak fast on any occasion whatever.

One day Mrs. Staines took her up-stairs, and showed her from the back window her husband pacing the yard, waiting for patients. Lady Cicely folded her arms, and contemplated him at first with a sort of zoological curiosity. Gentleman pacing back yard, like hyena, she had never seen before.

At last she opened her mouth in a whisper, "What is he doing?"

"Waiting for patients."

"Oh! Waiting—for—patients?"

"For patients that never come, and never will come."

"Cuwious!—How little I know of life."

"It is that all day, dear, or else writing."

Lady Cicely, with her eyes fixed on Staines, made a motion with her hand that she was attending.

"And they won't publish a word he writes."

"Poor man!"

"Nice for me; is it not?"

"I begin to understand," said Lady Cicely, quietly; and soon after retired with her invariable composure.

Meantime, Dr. Staines, like a good husband, had thrown out occasional hints to Mrs. Lucas that he had a wife, beautiful, accomplished, moped. More than that, he went so far as to regret to her that Mrs. Staines, being in a neighbourhood new to him, saw so little society; the more so, as she was formed to shine, and had not been used to seclusion.

All these hints fell dead on Mrs. Lucas. A handsome and skilful doctor was welcome to her: his wife—that was quite another matter.

But one day Mrs. Lucas saw Lady Cicely Treherne's carriage standing at the door. The style of the whole turnout impressed her. She wondered whose it was.

On another occasion she saw it drive up, and the lady get out. She recognised her; and the very next day this *parvenue* said adroitly, "Now, Dr. Staines, really you can't be allowed to hide your wife in this way. (Staines stared.) Why not introduce her to me next Wednesday? It is my night. I would give a dinner expressly for her; but I don't like to do that, while my husband is in Naples."

When Staines carried the invitation to his wife, she was delighted, and kissed him with childish frankness.

But the very next moment she became

thoughtful, uneasy, depressed. "Oh, dear; I've nothing to wear."

"Oh, nonsense, Rosa. Your wedding outfit."

"The idea! I can't go as a bride. It's not a masquerade."

"But you have other dresses."

"All gone by, more or less; or not fit for such parties as *she* gives. A hundred carriages!"

"Bring them down, and let me see them."

"Oh, yes." And the lady, who had nothing to wear, paraded a very fair show of dresses.

Staines saw something to admire in all of them. Mrs. Staines found more to object to in each.

At last he fell upon a silver-grey silk, of superlative quality.

"That! It is as old as the hills," shrieked Rosa.

"It looks just out of the shop. Come,

tell the truth; how often have you worn it?"

"I wore it before I was married."

"Ay, but how often?"

"Twice. Three times, I believe."

"I thought so. It is as good as new."

"But I have had it so long by me. I had it two years before I made it up."

"What does that matter? Do you think the people can tell how long a dress has been lurking in your wardrobe? This is childish, Rosa. There, with this dress as good as new, and your beauty, you will be as much admired, and perhaps hated, as your heart can desire."

"I am afraid not," said Rosa, naïvely. "Oh, how I wish I had known a week ago."

"I am very thankful you did not," said Staines, drily.

At ten o'clock, Mrs. Staines was nearly dressed; at a quarter past ten she demanded

ten minutes; at half-past ten she sought a reprieve; at a quarter to eleven, being assured that the street was full of carriages, which had put down at Mrs. Lucas's, she consented to emerge; and in a minute they were at the house.

They were shown first into a cloak-room, and then into a tea-room, and then mounted the stairs. One servant took their names, and bawled them to another four yards off, he to another about as near, and so on; and they edged themselves into the room, not yet too crowded to move in.

They had not taken many steps, on the chance of finding their hostess, when a slight buzz arose, and seemed to follow them.

Rosa wondered what that was; but only for a moment; she observed a tall, stout, aquiline woman fix an eye of bitter, diabolical, malignant hatred on her; and, as she advanced, ugly noses were cocked disdainfully, and scraggy shoulders elevated at

the risk of sending the bones through the leather, and a titter or two shot after her. A woman's instinct gave her the key at once; the sexes had complimented her at sight; each in their way; the men with respectful admiration; the women, with their inflammable jealousy, and ready hatred in another of the quality they value most in themselves. But the country girl was too many for them: she would neither see nor hear, but moved sedately on, and calmly crushed them with her southern beauty. Their dry, powdered faces could not live by the side of her glowing skin, with nature's delicate gloss upon it, and the rich blood mantling below it. The got-up beauties, *i.e.*, the majority, seemed literally to fade and wither as she passed.

Mrs. Lucas got to her, suppressed a slight maternal pang, having daughters to marry, and took her line in a moment; here was a decoy duck. Mrs. Lucas was all graciousness, made acquaintance, and took a little

turn with her, introducing her to one or tw persons; among the rest, to the malignan woman, Mrs. Barr. Mrs. Barr, on thi ceased to look daggers, and substitute icicles; but, on the hateful beauty movin away, dropped the icicles, and resumed th poniards.

The rooms filled; the heat became oppres sive, and the mixed odours of flowers, scent and perspiring humanity, sickening. Some unable to bear it, trickled out of the room and sat all down the stairs.

Rosa began to feel faint. Up came a tall sprightly girl, whose pertness was redeeme by a certain *bonhomie*, and said, "Mrs Staines, I believe? I am to make mysel agreeable to you. That is the order fron head-quarters."

"Miss Lucas," said Staines.

She jerked a little off-hand bow to him and said, "Will you trust her to me fo five minutes?"

"Certainly." But he did not much like it.

Miss Lucas carried her off, and told Dr. Staines, over her shoulder, now he could flirt to his heart's content.

"Thank you," said he, drily. "I'll await your return."

"Oh, there are some much greater flirts here than I am," said the ready Miss Lucas; and, whispering something in Mrs. Staines's ear, suddenly glided with her behind a curtain, pressed a sort of button fixed to a looking-glass door. The door opened, and behold they were in a delicious place, for which I can hardly find a word, since it was a boudoir and a conservatory in one: a large octagon, the walls lined from floor to ceiling with looking-glasses of moderate width, at intervals, and with creepers that covered the intervening spaces of the wall, and were trained so as to break the outline of the glasses, without greatly clouding the reflection. Ferns, in great variety, were grouped in a deep crescent, and in the bight of this green bay were a small table

and chairs. As there were no hothouse plants, the temperature was very cool, compared with the reeking oven they had escaped; and a little fountain bubbled, and fed a little meandering gutter that trickled away among the ferns; it ran crystal clear over little bright pebbles and shells. It did not always run, you understand; but Miss Lucas turned a secret tap, and started it.

"Oh, how heavenly!" said Rosa, with a sigh of relief; "and how good of you to bring me here!"

"Yes; by rights I ought to have waited till you fainted. But there is no making acquaintance among all those people. Mamma will ask such crowds; one is like a fly in a glue-pot."

Miss Lucas had good nature, smartness, and animal spirits; hence arose a vivacity and fluency that were often amusing, and passed for very clever. Reserve she had none; would talk about strangers, or friends, herself, her mother, her God, and the last

buffoon-singer, in a breath. At a hint from Rosa, she told her who the lady in the pink dress was, and the lady in the violet velvet, and so on; for each lady was defined by her dress, and, more or less, quizzed by this show-woman, not exactly out of malice, but because it is smarter and more natural to decry than to praise, and a little *médisance* is the spice to gossip, belongs to it, as mint-sauce to lamb. So they chattered away, and were pleased with each other, and made friends, and there, in cool grot, quite forgot the sufferings of their fellow-creatures in the adjacent Turkish bath, yclept Society. It was Rosa who first recollected herself. "Will not Mrs. Lucas be angry with me, if I keep you all to myself?"

"Oh, no; but I'm afraid we must go into the hothouse again. I like the greenhouse best, with such a nice companion."

They slipped noiselessly into the throng again, and wriggled about, Miss Lucas pre-

senting her new friend to several ladies and gentlemen.

Presently Staines found them, and then Miss Lucas wriggled away; and, in due course, the room was thinned by many guests driving off home, or to balls, and other receptions, and Dr. Staines and Mrs. Staines went home to the Bijou. Here the physician prescribed bed; but the lady would not hear of such a thing, until she had talked it all over. So they compared notes, and Rosa told him how well she had got on with Miss Lucas, and made a friendship. "But for that," said she, "I should be sorry I went among those people, such a dowdy."

"Dowdy!" said Staines. "Why you stormed the town; you were the great success of the night, and, for all I know, of the season." The wretch delivered this with unbecoming indifference.

"It is too bad to mock me, Christie. Where were your eyes?"

"To the best of my recollection they were one on each side of my nose."

"Yes, but some people are eyes and no eyes."

"I scorn the imputation; try me."

"Very well. Then did you see that lady in sky-blue silk, embroidered with flowers and flounced with white velvet, and the corsage point lace; and oh, such emeralds?"

"I did; a tall, skinny woman, with eyes resembling her jewels in colour, though not in brightness."

"Never mind her eyes; it is her dress I am speaking of. Exquisite; and what a coiffure! Well, did you see *her* in the black velvet, trimmed so deep with Chantilly lace, wave on wave, and her head-dress of crimson flowers, and such a *rivière* of diamonds; oh, dear! oh, dear!"

"I did, love. The room was an oven, but her rubicund face and suffocating costume made it seem a furnace."

"Stuff! Well, did you see the lady in

the corn-coloured silk, and poppies in her hair?"

"Of course I did. Ceres in person. She made me feel hot, too; but I cooled myself a bit at her pale, sickly face."

"Never mind their faces; that is not the point."

"Oh, excuse me; it is always a point with us benighted males, all eyes and no eyes."

"Well, then, the lady in white, with cherry-velvet bands, and a white tunic looped with crimson, and head-dress of white illusion, *à la vierge*, I think they call it."

"It was very refreshing; and adapted to that awful atmosphere. It was the nearest approach to nudity I ever saw, even amongst fashionable people."

"It was lovely; and then that superb figure in white illusion and gold, with all those narrow flounces over her slip of white silk *glacé*, and a wreath of white flowers,

with gold wheat-ears amongst them, in her hair; and oh! oh! oh! her pearls, Oriental, and as big as almonds!"

"And oh! oh! oh! her nose! reddish, and as long as a woodcock's."

"Noses! noses! stupid! That is not what strikes you first in a woman dressed like an angel."

"Well, if you were to run up against that one, as I nearly did, her nose *would* be the thing that would strike you first. Nose! it was a rostrum! the spear-head of Goliah."

"Now, don't, Christopher. This is no laughing matter. Do you mean you were not ashamed of your wife? I was."

"No, I was not; you had but one rival; a very young lady, wise before her age; a blonde, with violet eyes. She was dressed in light mauve-coloured silk, without a single flounce, or any other tomfoolery to fritter away the sheen and colour of an exquisite material; her sunny hair was another wave

of colour, wreathed with a thin line of white jessamine flowers closely woven, that scented the air. This girl was the moon of that assembly, and you were the sun."

"I never even saw her."

"Eyes and no eyes. She saw you, and said, 'Oh, what a beautiful creature!' for I heard her. As for the old stagers, whom you admire so, their faces were all clogged with powder, the pores stopped up, the true texture of the skin abolished. They looked downright nasty, whenever you or that young girl passed by them. Then it was you saw to what a frightful extent women are got up in our day, even young women, and respectable women. No, Rosa, dress can do little for you; you have beauty—real beauty."

"Beauty! That passes unnoticed, unless one is well dressed."

"Then what an obscure pair the Apollo Belvidere and the Venus de Medicis must be."

"Oh! they are dressed—in marble."

Christopher Staines stared first, then smiled.

"Well done," said he, admiringly. That *is* a knock-down blow. So now you have silenced your husband, go you to bed directly. I can't afford you diamonds; so I will take care of that little insignificant trifle, your beauty."

Mrs. Staines and Mrs. Lucas exchanged calls, and soon Mrs. Staines could no longer complain she was out of the world. Mrs. Lucas invited her to every party, because her beauty was an instrument of attraction she knew how to use; and Miss Lucas took a downright fancy to her; drove her in the Park, and on Sundays to the Zoological Gardens, just beginning to be fashionable.

The Lucases rented a box at the opera, and if it was not let at the library by six o'clock, and if other engagements permitted, word was sent round to Mrs. Staines, as a matter of course, and she was taken to the opera. She began almost to live at the

Lucases, and to be oftener fatigued than moped.

The usual order of things was inverted; the maiden lady educated the matron; for Miss Lucas knew all about everybody in the Park, honourable or dishonourable; all the scandals, and all the flirtations; and whatever she knew, she related point-blanc. Being as inquisitive as voluble, she soon learned how Mrs. Staines and her husband were situated. She took upon her to advise her in many things, and especially impressed upon her that Dr. Staines must keep a carriage, if he wanted to get on in medicine. This piece of advice accorded so well with Rosa's wishes, that she urged it on her husband again and again.

He objected that no money was coming in, and therefore it would be insane to add to their expenses. Rosa persisted, and at last worried Staines with her importunity. He began to give rather short answers. Then she quoted Miss Lucas against him.

He treated the authority with marked contempt; and then Rosa fired up a little. Then Staines held his peace; but did not buy a carriage to visit his no patients.

So, at last, Rosa complained to Lady Cicely Treherne, and made her the judge between her husband and herself.

Lady Cicely drawled out a prompt but polite refusal to play that part. All that could be elicited from her, and that with difficulty, was, "Why quall with your husband about a cawwige; he is your best fwiend."

"Ah, that he is," said Rosa; "but Miss Lucas is a good friend, and she knows the world. We don't; neither Christopher nor I."

So she continued to nag at her husband about it, and to say that he was throwing his only chance away.

Galled as he was by neglect, this was irritating, and, at last, he could not help telling her she was unreasonable. "You live a gay

life, and I a sad one. I consent to this, and let you go about with these Lucases, because you were so dull; but you should not consult them in our private affairs. Their interference is indelicate and improper. I will not set up a carriage till I have patients to visit. I am sick of seeing our capital dwindle, and no income created. I will never set up a carriage till I have taken a hundred-guinea fee."

"Oh! Then we shall go splashing through the mud all our days."

"Or ride in a cab," said Christopher, with a quiet doggedness that left no hope of his yielding.

One afternoon Miss Lucas called for Mrs. Staines to drive in the Park, but did not come up-stairs; it was an engagement, and she knew Mrs. Staines would be ready, or nearly. Mrs. Staines, not to keep her waiting, came down rather hastily, and, in the very passage, whipped out of her pocket a

little glass, and a little powder puff, and puffed her face all over in a trice. She was then going out; but her husband called her into the study. "Rosa, my dear," said he, "you were going out with a dirty face."

"Oh!" cried she, "give me a glass."

"There is no need of that. All you want is a basin and some nice rain-water. I keep a little reservoir of it."

He then handed her the same with great politeness. She looked in his eye, and saw he was not to be trifled with. She complied like a lamb, and the heavenly colour and velvet gloss that resulted were admirable.

He kissed her and said, "Ah! now you are my Rosa again. Oblige me by handing over that powder-puff to me." She looked vexed, but complied. "When you come back, I will tell you why."

"You are a pest," said Mrs. Staines, and so joined her friend, rosy with rain-water and a rub.

"Dear me, how handsome you look to-day!" was Miss Lucas's first remark.

Rosa never dreamed that rain-water and rub could be the cause of her looking so well.

"It is my tiresome husband," said she. "He objects to powder, and he has taken away my puff."

"And you stood that?"

"Obliged to."

"Why, you poor-spirited little creature, I should like to see a husband presume to interfere with me in those things. Here, take mine."

Rosa hesitated a little. "Well—no—I think not."

Miss Lucas laughed at her, and quizzed her so on her allowing a man to interfere in such sacred things as dress and cosmetics, that she came back irritated with her husband, and gave him a short answer or two. Then he asked what was the matter.

"You treat me like a child—taking away my very puff."

"I treat you like a beautiful flower, that no bad gardener shall wither whilst I am here."

"What nonsense! How could that wither me? It is only violet powder—what they put on babies."

"And who are the Herods that put it on babies?"

"Their own mothers, that love them ten times more than the fathers do."

"And kill a hundred of them for one a man ever kills. Mothers!—the most wholesale homicides in the nation. We will examine your violet powder: bring it down here."

While she was gone he sent for a breakfast-cupful of flour, and when she came back he had his scales out, and begged her to put a teaspoonful of flour into one scale and of violet powder into another. The flour kicked the beam, as Homer expresses himself.

"Put another spoonful of flour."

The one spoonful of violet powder outweighed the two of flour.

"Now," said Staines, "does not that show you the presence of a mineral in your vegetable powder? I suppose they tell you it is made of white violets dried, and triturated in a diamond mill. Let us find out what metal it is. We need not go very deep into chemistry for that." He then applied a simple test, and detected the presence of lead in large quantities. Then he lectured her: "Invisible perspiration is a process of nature necessary to health and to life. The skin is made porous for that purpose. You can kill anybody in an hour or two by closing the pores. A certain infallible ass, called Pope Leo XII., killed a little boy in two hours, by gilding him to adorn the pageant of his first procession as Pope. But what is death to the whole body must be injurious to a part. What madness, then, to clog the pores of so large and important a surface as the face, and check the invisible perspiration: how much more to insert lead into your system every day of

your life; a cumulative poison, and one so deadly and so subtle, that the Sheffield file-cutters die in their prime, from merely hammering on a leaden anvil. And what do you gain by this suicidal habit? No plum has a sweeter bloom or more delicious texture than the skin of your young face; but this mineral filth hides that delicate texture, and substitutes a dry, uniform appearance, more like a certain kind of leprosy than health. Nature made your face the rival of peaches, roses, lilies; and you say 'No; I know better than my Creator and my God; my face shall be like a dusty miller's.' Go into any flour-mill, and there you shall see men with faces exactly like your friend Miss Lucas's. But, before a miller goes to his sweetheart, he always washes his face. You ladies would never get a miller down to your level in brains. It is a miller's *dirty* face our monomaniacs of women imitate, not the face a miller goes a-courting with."

"La! what a fuss about nothing!"

"About nothing! Is your health nothing? Is your beauty nothing? Well, then, it will cost you nothing to promise me never to put powder on your face again."

"Very well, I promise. Now what will you do for me?"

"Work for you—write for you—suffer for you—be self-denying for you—and even give myself the pain of disappointing you now and then—looking forward to the time when I shall be able to say 'Yes' to everything you ask me. Ah! child, you little know what it costs me to say 'No' to *you*."

Rosa put her arms round him and acquiesced. She was one of those who go with the last speaker; but, for that very reason, the eternal companionship of so flighty and flirty a girl as Miss Lucas was injurious to her.

One day Lady Cicely Treherne was sitting with Mrs. Staines, smiling languidly at

her talk, and occasionally drawling out a little plain good sense, when in came Miss Lucas, with her tongue well hung, as usual, and dashed into twenty topics in ten minutes.

This young lady in her discourse was like those little oily beetles you see in small ponds, whose whole life is spent in tacking —confound them for it!—generally at right angles. What they are in navigation was Miss Lucas in conversation: tacked so eternally from topic to topic, that no man on earth, and not every woman, could follow her.

At the sight and sound of her Lady Cicely congealed and stiffened. Easy and unpretending with Mrs. Staines, she was all dignity, and even majesty, in the presence of this chatterbox; and the smoothness with which the transfiguration was accomplished marked that accomplished actress the high-bred woman of the world.

Rosa, better able to estimate the change of manner than Miss Lucas was, who did not know how little this Sawny was afflicted

with misplaced dignity, looked wistfully and distressed at her. Lady Cicely smiled kindly in reply, rose, without seeming to hurry—catch her condescending to be rude to Charlotte Lucas—and took her departure, with a profound and most gracious curtsy to the lady who had driven her away.

Mrs. Staines saw her down-stairs, and said, ruefully, "I am afraid you do not like my friend Miss Lucas. She is a great rattle, but so goodnatured and clever."

Lady Cicely shook her head. "Clevaa people don't talk so much nonsense before stangaas."

"Oh dear!" said Rosa. "I was in hopes you would like her."

"Do *you* like her?"

"Indeed I do; but I shall not, if she drives an older friend away."

"My dyah, I'm not easily dwiven from those I esteem. But you undastand that is not a woman for me to mispwonownce my

'ah's' befaw—NOR FOR YOU TO MAKE A BOSOM FWIEND OF—WOSA STAINES."

She said this with a sudden maternal solemnity and kindness that contrasted nobly and strangely with her yea-nay style, and Mrs. Staines remembered the words years after they were spoken.

It so happened that after this Mrs. Staines received no more visits from Lady Cicely for some time, and that vexed her. She knew her sex enough to be aware that they are very jealous, and she permitted herself to think that this high-minded Sawny was jealous of Miss Lucas.

This idea, founded on a general estimate of her sex, was dispelled by a few lines from Lady Cicely, to say her family and herself were in deep distress: her brother, Lord Ayscough, lay dying from an accident.

Then Rosa was all remorse, and ran down to Staines to tell him. She found him with an open letter in his hand. It was from Dr.

Barr, and on the same subject. The Doctor, who had always been friendly to him, invited him to come down at once to Hallowtree Hall, in Huntingdonshire, to a consultation. There was a friendly intimation to start at once, as the patient might die any moment.

Husband and wife embraced each other in a tumult of surprised thankfulness. A few necessaries were thrown into a carpet-bag, and Dr. Staines was soon whirled into Huntingdonshire. Having telegraphed beforehand, he was met at the station by the earl's carriage and people, and driven to the Hall. He was received by an old, silver-haired butler, looking very sad, who conducted him to a boudoir; and then went and tapped gently at the door of the patient's room. It was opened and shut very softly, and Lady Cicely, dressed in black, and looking paler than ever, came into the room.

"Dr. Staines, I think?"

He bowed.

"Thank you for coming so promptly. Dr. Barr is gone. I fear he thinks—he thinks —Oh, Dr. Staines—no sign of life but in his poor hands, that keep moving night and day."

Staines looked very grave at that. Lady Cicely observed it, and, faint at heart, could say no more, but led the way to the sick-room.

There in a spacious chamber, lighted by a grand oriel window and two side windows, lay rank, title, wealth, and youth stricken down in a moment by a common accident. The sufferer's face was bloodless, his eyes fixed, and no signs of life but in his thumbs, and they kept working with strange regularity.

In the room were a nurse and the surgeon; the neighbouring physician, who had called in Dr. Barr, had just paid his visit and gone away.

Lady Cicely introduced Dr. Staines and Mr. White, and then Dr. Staines stood and

fixed his eyes on the patient in profound silence.

Lady Cicely scanned his countenance searchingly, and was struck with the extraordinary power and intensity it assumed in examining the patient; but the result was not encouraging. Dr. Staines looked grave and gloomy.

At last, without removing his eye from the recumbent figure, he said quietly to Mr. White, "Thrown from his horse, sir."

"Horse fell on him, Dr. Staines."

"Any visible injuries?"

"Yes. Severe contusions, and a rib broken and pressed upon the lungs. I replaced and set it. Will you see?"

"If you please."

He examined and felt the patient, and said it had been ably done.

Then he was silent and searching.

At last he spoke again. "The motion of the thumbs corresponds exactly with his pulse."

"Is that so, sir?"

"It is. The case is without a parallel. How long has he been so?"

"Nearly a week."

"Impossible!"

"It is so, sir."

Lady Cicely confirmed this.

"All the better," said Dr. Staines, upon reflection. "Well, sir," said he, "the visible injuries having been ably relieved, I shall look another way for the cause." Then, after another pause, "I must have his head shaved."

Lady Cicely demurred a little to this; but Dr. Staines stood firm, and his lordship's valet undertook the job.

Staines directed him where to begin; and when he had made a circular tonsure on the top of the head, had it sponged with tepid water.

"I thought so," said he. "Here is the mischief;" and he pointed to a very slight indentation on the left side of the pia mater.

"Observe," said he, "there is no corresponding indentation on the other side. Underneath this trifling depression a minute piece of bone is doubtless pressing on the most sensitive part of the brain. He must be trephined."

Mr. White's eyes sparkled.

"You are a hospital surgeon, sir?"

"Yes, Dr. Staines. I have no fear of the operation."

"Then I hand the patient over to you. The case at present is entirely surgical."

White was driven home, and soon returned with the requisite instruments. The operation was neatly performed, and then Lady Cicely was called in. She came trembling; her brother's fingers were still working, but not so regularly.

"That is only *habit*," said Staines; "it will soon leave off, now the cause is gone."

And, truly enough, in about five minutes the fingers became quiet. The eyes became

human next; and within half an hour after the operation the Earl gave a little sigh.

Lady Cicely clasped her hands, and uttered a little cry of delight.

"This will not do," said Staines. "I shall have you screaming when he speaks."

"Oh, Dr. Staines, will he ever speak?"

"I think so; and very soon. So be on your guard."

This strange scene reached its climax soon after, by the Earl saying, quietly,

"Are her knees broke, Tom?"

Lady Cicely uttered a little scream, but instantly suppressed it.

"No, my Lord," said Staines, smartly; "only rubbed a bit. You can go to sleep, my Lord. I'll take care of the mare."

"All right," said his lordship; and composed himself to slumber.

Dr. Staines, at the earnest request of

Lady Cicely, stayed all night; and in course of the day advised her how to nurse the patient, since both physician and surgeon had done with him.

He said the patient's brain might be irritable for some days, and no women in silk dresses, or crinoline, or creaking shoes, must enter the room. He told her the nurse was evidently a clumsy woman, and would be letting things fall. She had better get some old soldier used to nursing. "And don't whisper in the room," said he; "nothing irritates them worse; and don't let anybody play a piano within hearing; but in a day or two you may try him with slow and continuous music on the flute or violin if you like. Don't touch his bed suddenly; don't sit on it or lean on it. Dole sunlight into his room by degrees; and, when he can bear it, drench him with it. Never mind what the old school tell you. About these things they know a good deal less than nothing."

Lady Cicely received all this like an oracle.

The cure was telegraphed to Dr. Barr, and he was requested to settle the fee. He was not the man to undersell the profession, and was jealous of nobody, having a large practice, and a very wealthy wife. So he telegraphed back—"Fifty guineas, and a guinea a mile from London."

So, as Christopher Staines sat at an early breakfast, with the carriage waiting to take him to the train, two notes were brought him on a salver.

They were both directed by Lady Cicely Treherne. One of them contained a few kind and feeling words of gratitude and esteem; the other, a cheque, drawn by the Earl's steward, for one hundred and thirty guineas.

He bowled up to London, and told it all to Rosa. She sparkled with pride, affection, and joy.

"Now, who says you are not a genius?"

she cried. "A hundred and thirty guineas for one fee! Now, if you love your wife as she loves you—you will set up a brougham."

END OF VOL. I.

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